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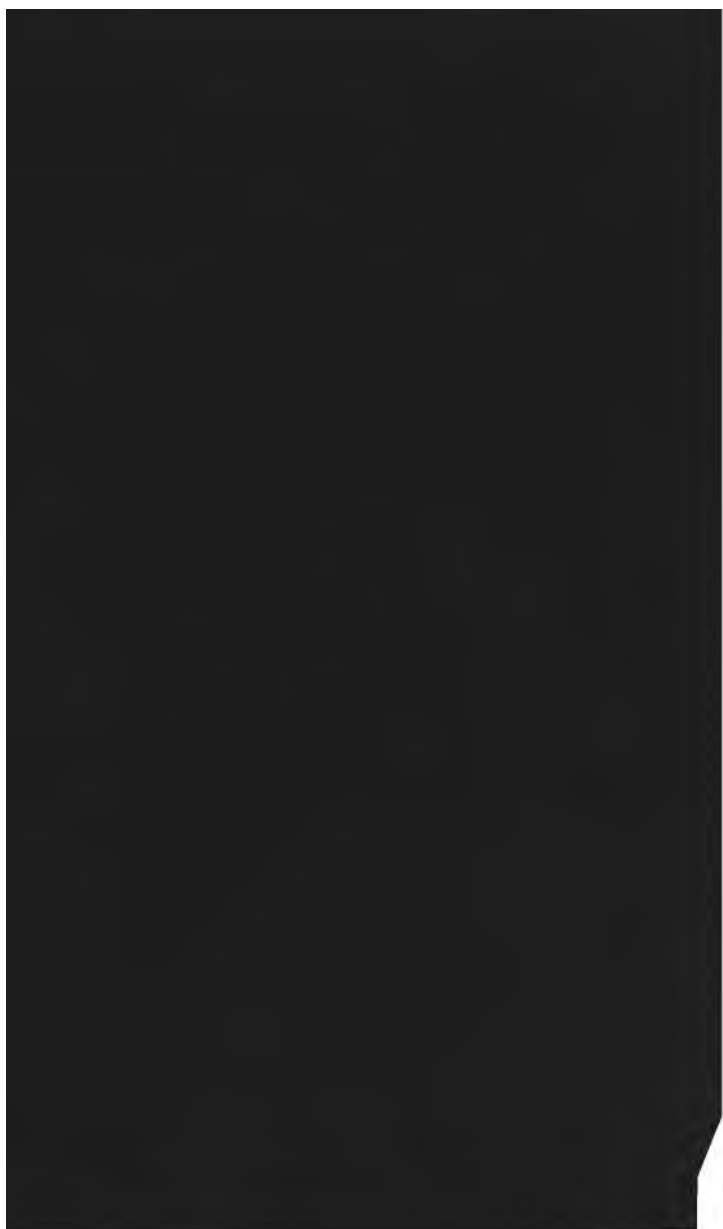
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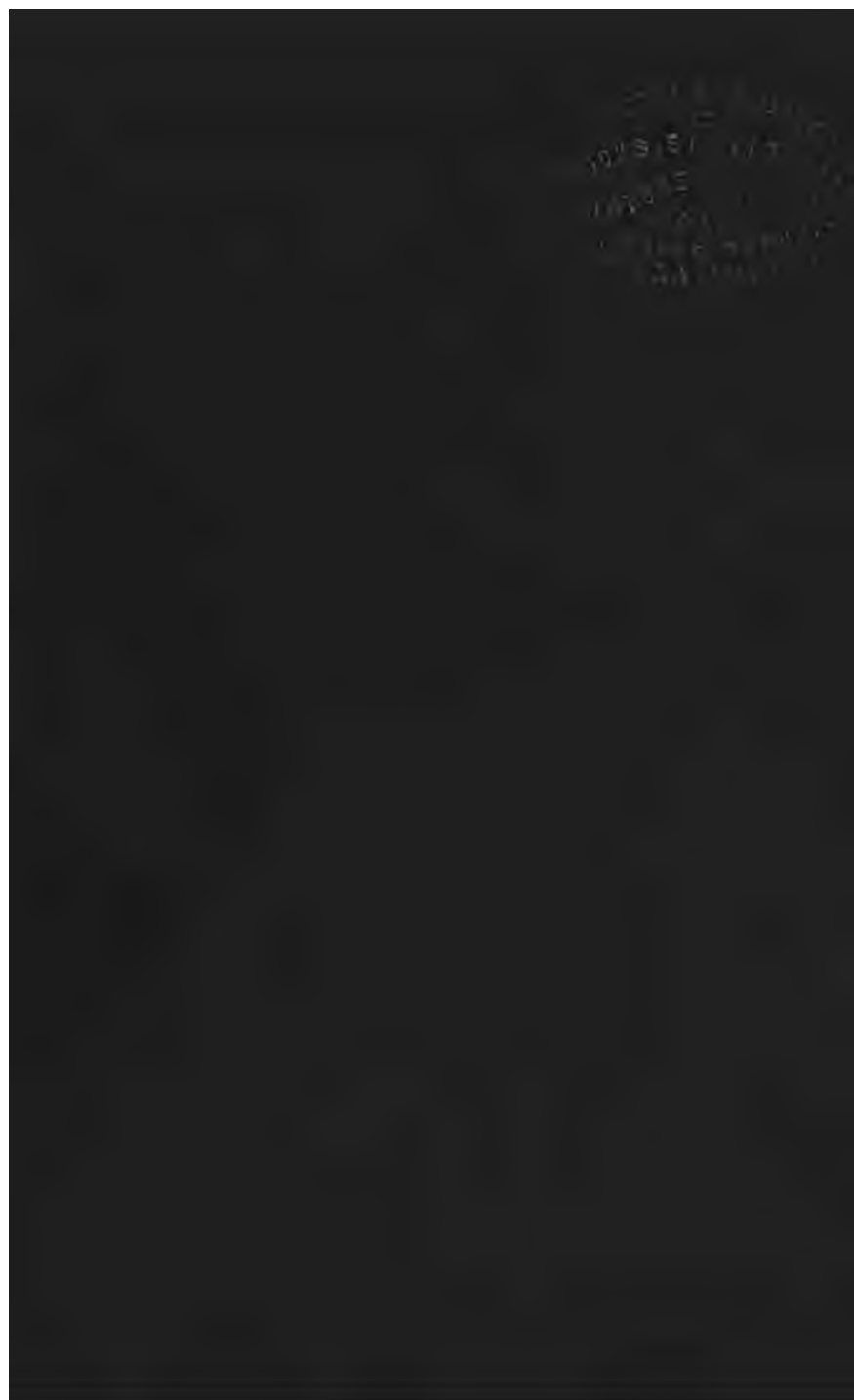


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"The new book"

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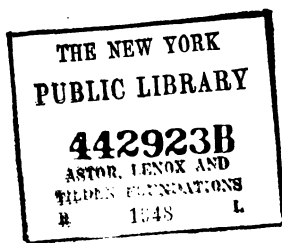
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By day and night, where'er we go,  
'Tis Destiny that watches o'er us still,  
With calm and sleepless eye.

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and calmness what I trust may be a generous but honest verdict.

Tenderly I hand you this book, dear reader, trusting that in its perusal you will experience both pleasure and consolation. Believe me, I have not written it to fill up the vacancy of an idle hour merely, far from it. If in reading it you are inspired with one more good thought,—one more noble aspiration,—I shall feel amply rewarded. If in its course it teaches one heart to depend more implicitly on the good providence of our kind heavenly Father, I shall feel a blessing and gladness which wealth or fame can never give.

Kindly I hang around you as you open the following pages, and as I put your hand in that of Grace Lee and Evan Dale, I introduce you with pleasure to my hero and heroine, wishing that with them you may have many pleasant thoughts and much sweet companionship, and may the happiness and love which was theirs be yours ever.

# EVAN DALE.

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## CHAPTER I.

---

I asked of the angels to name her for me,  
And one of them sweetly answered, Grace Lee.

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IN one of the most enterprising cities of New England, whose domes and steeples look far out to sea, over the azure mirror of its island-dotted harbor, there lived a merchant named William Lee. Step by step he had risen to wealth and influence, and few would have recognized in him the poor lad who many years before had entered the metropolis with nothing but his good strong heart to cheer him. Since then thirty years had passed, and he stood in his manhood's glory at the golden goal of life. This was not because fortunate circumstances had passed him up over the shoulders of other men, but there was that within him which dug perseveringly into life's precious mines, and brought from thence the hidden treasures.

Early in life William Lee had married one who possessed the rare gifts of beauty, truth, and goodness in a remarkable degree. Some among the young ladies might have chosen differently for the young merchant, their

anxiety on this point arising from the fact, that an industrious and enterprising young man was much thought of and courted, in those days, by the elite of society. To say that they lived happily together, may perhaps be discredited in these times, when so many after their wedding day and honeymoon are over, settle down in the married state as they would into an old, worn, and dusty stage-coach about to depart on a weary journey, over rough roads and rocky steeps, and whose passengers quarrel and scold the whole dreary way.

William Lee had but one child, the heroine of our story, who was then in her seventeenth year, and just ready to bloom into the fair rose of womanhood. Possessing the rare qualities of her parents both in mind and person, and adorned by education and accomplishment, she was the beauty and pride of her home, and the recognized queen and life of every circle in which she moved.

In person, Grace Lee was beyond comparison or description. From beneath a full and well-defined brow, platted by glossy chestnut tresses, gleamed the fresh and sunny countenance, and azure eyes, keeping company with rosy cheeks and laughing dimples, and setting off a face and head prominent with the good traits and graces of phrenology. In natural endowment there was nothing that the most critical observer could detect as wanting. Nature in this instance seemed to have surpassed herself in the beautiful production, so that no wonder our heroine was the acknowledged belle of the puritan metropolis. As yet she had mingled but little with the world. Fortunately her experience thus far was confined to her

youthful acquaintances, and these principally of her own sex. She had, owing to the manner of her education, but few intimate friends, which fact perhaps saved her from the affectation and pride which are so often seen in those of the young, who have their friends by the score, and their acquaintances by dozens, so that their independence and originality, if they have any, are taken away; and, moulded more by others than themselves, they pass over the stage of life like moving statues and automatons, building on the quicksands of others' opinions, those frail and worthless characters of which the world is so full, which, having no motive power of their own, are drifted hither and thither by every wind that blows.

Gentle and loving in disposition, but firm and determined in character, Grace had grown up free and untrammelled, not spoiled by the whims and fancies of others, nor by parental indulgence and anxiety, as many children are, I am sorry to say, without hope of cure or improvement.

Grace had for her nearest friend, her governess, a lady of rare attainments, and much beloved by the family; so that when she had nominally finished the education of her pupil, she still remained and made her home with them, who felt that their only child needed just such a companion in the school of life she was soon to enter.

Grace's education having been wholly confined to her parents and governess, she was therefore exempt from the pernicious influence of private boarding-schools and academies, from which so many young ladies emerge, to float like gilded gossamer through society, their highest



accomplishments being generally some knowledge of French and music, to say nothing of the host of their other attainments too numerous to mention.

In this I must not be understood as depreciating the good qualities and attainments of my young lady readers in the least. To such of them, however, who, favored by fortune, have had the like opportunities, and who may or may not have improved them, it may satisfy their curiosity to know of what branches from the tree of knowledge, Grace's education consisted of, and in which she was not a mere novice, but a thorough proficient.

First and foremost, and more important than all, she was well versed in the science of the kitchen in every particular. Here in fact is where the education of every young woman should begin. Next in order may be considered parlor attainments, which are ornamental and secondary in their nature. First in order the kitchen and chamber, and then the parlor. As this statement seems correct not only in theory but in practice, I think I do not detract from Grace Lee's attainments in the least, when I say, that she could wash and iron, and make and bake a most excellent pan of bread or cake for supper or breakfast table. In the parties given from time to time to her young friends, the refreshments did not come from the confectioners, but were made exclusively by her own fair hands. In truth she was in great danger of surpassing the cook, chambermaid, and servant girl, so perfectly at home was she in these common but all important things of life. Did father want a button sewed on? She would fly to her needle and thread, and in a moment the thing

would be done. In other words, Grace Lee was thoroughly versed in the art of housekeeping, which is so much of a trial to many young ladies of the present generation, and especially to numerous young married couples, who are forced to go out to board, and put up with what are called first class accommodations in a genteel boarding-house.

“Pass along some of that nice bread and cake made by Grace Lee,” I seem to hear some one say. In reply, the author would state, that Grace Lee does not keep a bakery establishment for the benefit of the public, but being a particular friend of the young lady, will do wonders to obtain a piece for those who are curiously inclined. Here and there perchance some bachelor, or even some married man sighs for a Grace Lee in his extensive housekeeping affairs, to do his washing, and sew on his falling-off buttons, and keep him on the whole looking neatly and respectable through the wear and tear of life, which a glance at tailors’ bills paid or unpaid, proves, is hard on clothes. To such the author commends both single and united blessedness.

The other branches of Grace Lee’s education were many. She was well trained in the various languages, and in mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy, she was perfectly at home. In all that contributes to a fine education she had received thorough instruction. In music she was well acquainted with the works of the highest masters, from the favorite opera, overture, and oratorio, down to the sweet simple melody, the rippling waltz, and the sparkling polka. Gifted with a fine voice, she sang

and accompanied herself by the piano, harp, or guitar as her taste for the time dictated. Her out-door exercises consisted of horseback riding, skating, rowing, and swimming, by which her form was well developed in symmetry and strength, and her countenance animated by the ruddy roses and rounded dimples of health and vigor. In short, Grace Lee was a truly accomplished young lady. She was now nearing her eighteenth birth-day, the twentieth of October, which was to be celebrated on a magnificent scale at her father's city residence, which, during the family's stay at their country-seat during the summer, had been adorned especially for the coming festival, from which she was to bid farewell to her youthful days, and look forward to the years before her.

Just here, I hear some one say, "I wonder what Miss Grace Lee will wear." To those who, standing on the tip-toe of fashion, thus question, it might be a consolation to know that Grace had made up her mind a month beforehand what to wear on the occasion, a matter most difficult for ladies to decide upon, from the days of Eve until now.

Suffice it just merely to mention, that Grace's attire was both sensible and elegant; finished as it was by the best artists, who felt highly honored in doing their best for such a good young lady as Miss Grace Lee, who never was known to speak an unkind word to any one, much less to her humble servants, the milliner and dress-maker.

## CHAPTER II.

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Sweetly from the bells of time  
Sounded forth their eighteenth chime.  
O'er life's laughing summer scene  
Rang the number sweet eighteen.

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ON the morning of the twentieth of October, the city mansion of the Lee family began to assume a lively appearance. The windows and blinds were opened, and the spacious apartments thrown open to the sun and air. The rich curtains fluttered and fanned the breezes which sighed in sadness as they wandered on in quest of the departed summer. Servants bustling here and there, bespoke the arrangements which were going on within for the coming night, which,

Ere its stars in rosy morning set,

was to witness an unusual pageant of pride and beauty. Not until the day before did Grace issue her invitations, which she distributed with her own fair hands; thus showing her appreciation of her friends, and displaying a personal interest in their coming. Of course the whole city was in a bustle in regard to the affair, and among those who felt it belonged especially to them, there was considerable rivalry and speculation as to who should be the fortunate possessors of an invitation to the brilliant

party, which was the first of a series to continue through the winter.

On arriving home, Grace disposed herself to rest on the comfortable lounge near the bay window, and indulged in pleasant reveries and anticipations of the coming morrow.

In her hours of calm and meditation, Grace was surpassingly beautiful and interesting. Into the cosy and comfortable sitting-room poured the full glory of the autumnal sun, as he bade the day farewell from the distant hills, and wafted onward in his glowing chariot with its fiery horses, to the far Indies of the East.

Far over hill and vale and meadow, Grace looked till her eye rested on the brim of the horizon, as if to peer into the uncertain future. Perhaps in that quiet autumn hour, sober but pleasant memories came over her, as she thought of her youthful days.

Oh, those sunny days of ours gone by — our youthful days! Do we not love to refer to them, only to realize that they are gone forever! Oh ye days of youth! ye are strangers now to us; ye know us not! Your sunny seats are filled by others, and you know us no more in your pleasant places!

Leave us alone! We love to gaze  
Back on the past in vain;  
We are dreaming of our youth's bright days,  
When will they come again?

What some of Grace's thoughts and feelings were at this time though, we will find out by her friend Lizzie, who has just entered the room in a somewhat lively mood,

and broken the spell. "Why, dear Grace! What in the world are you dreaming of? Some handsome knight or cavalier?"

"I am not dreaming exactly, Lizzie; I am thinking of the many happy hours I have spent in this quiet place, among the haunts so familiar to me. Believe me, I never leave them without some feelings of sadness, especially when I go into the city for the winter, where I often wish myself back again among my old friends and playmates, the trees and meadows."

"Grace, how would you like to stay here the year round, and see and hear nothing save nature in its beauty and sublimity?"

"Not having tried it, I cannot say, Lizzie; it might not be the worst to suffer, neither the best to enjoy. I dare say, however, that Robinson Crusoe never enjoyed so much in his life as when he was on the lonely island. In my case, though, I should have a great deal more encouragement than he had."

"Well said, Grace; but it seems to me you have left your city friends out of the account altogether. Do you think they would come out to see you in the winter time?"

"Certainly, Lizzie, you would be one of the very first. Only think! What good winter parties I might have in father's summer-house!"

"There, Grace, I see you will never do to be a hermitess. I wager to say, you would not stay out here a week alone, after we left you."

"Agreed, Lizzie; I should not stay alone, as you say.

Those who are most alone, as far as the world goes, may have the most companionship. In this is the beauty and charm of solitude. It depends not so much on the outward circumstances in which we are placed, as upon the inward state of mind and heart, that we enjoy earthly things. It may be winter in the world around us, but in the gardens of the soul there may be the bloom of an immortal summer."

"When the trees are leafless, and the flowers have died on the tomb of the departed year, the mind, heedless of time, and its passing seasons, may be twined with the evergreens of hope, and decked with the sweet, fragrant garlands of memories which shall know no night or winter."

After taking this highly philosophical view of life, Grace arose, and, taking down her broad-brimmed hat, sauntered forth for a walk, her companion instinctively following suit, at the same time doubting very much Grace's honest intentions.

Leaving the house, they took their way down the road-side for some distance, and then crossing the meadows, were lost to sight among the woods, until wending their footsteps up the sloping banks, they stood entranced upon the borders of a miniature lake set like a mirror in its native hills. Around the margin of the lake hung low and tangled bushes, while just behind were graceful sweeps of pine, maple, and evergreen-trees, which stood like priests in robes of glory, waving their golden censors around the altars of nature's evening temple, calling a universe to worship.

"How charming, Lizzie! yet there are but few to enjoy it. How much of beauty there is in this world which is unknown and uncared for. In fact, but few see or appreciate the real beauty of God's fair creation. When I have wandered here, Liz, guess what I have thought of most?"

"I could not tell, Grace, for the life of me."

"Well, Liz, I have thought of the Indians, who, perchance, pitched their wigwams on this very place, or launched their canoes from yonder cove."

"I sometimes think of them too, Grace, and can imagine just how they would appear if they were now in sight; but they will never leave their happy hunting-grounds. Romance and history is all that remains of them. In the memory of man they will remain as a strange, wild race, whose origin is unknown, and whose goal near the setting sun is nearly reached."

"Of them there are, alas! many unwritten Hiawathas."

Turning around, the two ascended a gradual inclined plane, which opened through the trees, on either side, into a bold land promontory, which was in striking but harmonious contrast with the surrounding scenery, from which the landscape stretched far away in the distance.

"What a splendid view there is from here, Grace. Do you not doubt sometimes, when you see the sun go down, whether it will rise again to-morrow?"

"No, Liz, I never doubted in matters where infinite goodness and love were concerned. If the sun should be withdrawn, the moon, stars, and planets would roll rayless in their orbits, and night itself, with all its glory, vanish



into lasting darkness and oblivion. In contrast, Liz, what a beautiful scene this is! Your eye never rested on a fairer one. I often think of how I should like to visit Europe, and see its famous galleries and collections of art, but here before us is a picture which surpasses them all."

"If I should cross the ocean, Grace, I should find as lovely and interesting pictures as this, not in art, but in nature. To wander through classic scenes and localities made immortal by romance and history; to roam where the very air is redolent with the breath of genius and divinity, would furnish many a picture of peerless beauty for the eye to gaze upon with delight.

"I wonder, Grace, where we shall be to-morrow night about this time?"

"Why, Liz, you surprise me. You have made me make the quickest passage from Europe to America on record. I had almost forgotten the party we are to have, Liz. Ha, ha! what a time there will be! It gives me peculiar pleasure to think of it."

"Who have you invited, Grace?"

"You cannot guess, Lizzie," replied Grace, as she gave way to a hearty and musical laugh, which rang through the air as they entered the house on their return, Grace's parents wondering what she was laughing at; the traces of which accomplishment remained in a dimpling smile on her rosy cheeks, like a playful ripple of light on a sunset river.

"Well, Grace," inquired her father, "how did you succeed in your city tour? All your shop-bills distributed?"

"Oh yes, father, and you'd better have a good stock in to-morrow; for they are coming to buy you out, stock, shop, and counting-room and all. What do you think of that?"

"Ha, ha, Grace, a pretty good invoice to begin with, I declare. They will buy you out very quick, if that is a sample. Give us a list of the buyers."

"I cannot do that, father, for I do not know now, who I have invited, or how many."

"You can't tell, Grace, whom I have ventured to invite on my own account."

"I do not think you have invited those I care for the most."

"Then, Grace, you have got some particular ones. You ought to have told us of that before. Only think, Grace, just imagine how sweet the society of old father Graham will be. Suppose yourself dancing with the elder Porter, or waltzing with old Hunting."

"The imagination is truer than the reality there, father, a great deal. I hope, though, you will entertain such good old friends, if they should come, in such a manner that they will not feel slighted."

"There, Grace, I can tell. I've no doubt there is some young gentleman you would rather have come than all the others."

"True, father; perhaps I have some choice. Why shouldn't a young lady have? and if you know who the young man in question is, I trust you will introduce me to him."

"Agreed, Grace, if you will tell me who he is."

"Oh, I don't know what his name is, father, at all. He is good looking, though, I'll warrant."

"Then, Grace, you have a candidate."

"The thing is to get him elected, father."

"Who is he, Grace?"

"Yes; that's the question, father. Who is he? If you know, I want you to tell me. There is a deep mystery attached to him. There is this much about him, I have seen him a few times."

"Please describe him, Grace."

"Well, he is good size, well formed, with broad shoulders, which give him a remarkably commanding appearance, and the expression of his face is both gentle and beautiful. In form and feature he is so different from common young men, and so much handsomer withal, that I should really like to make his acquaintance at the first agreeable opportunity."

"It strikes me, Grace, that he is a hero of your imagination then."

"Not at all, father. He is as large and real as life, and just as natural."

"A real hero, then, Grace. When did you see or dream of him last?"

"I don't remember exactly, father, though it may be a year or two ago."

"Well done, Grace, and you have kept him in mind ever since. He must have made a deep impression on you. I hope he will be there to-morrow night."

Here, as Grace was about to retire for the night, this playful conversation ended; Mr. Lee very much in doubt

as to whether his daughter was really in earnest or not.

Over the beautiful village the stillness of the even-time settled like a magic dream, while from their high places the distant stars looked down upon a sleeping world. Boldly from the village church-spire chimed the solemn hour of midnight, sounding like twelve golden notes from the harps of the twelve angels of the twilight. The full autumn moon cast its veil of silver over the fields where the harvest song was hushed, and the reaper's sickle lay beside the garnered golden sheaves, and lighting up Grace's chamber, the curtains of which were drawn aside, looked in upon the fair sleeper, and bade farewell to her, ere its shining paddles dipped silently into the horizon waters of the eastern world.

## CHAPTER III.

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Speed on, Old Time, and on your aged shoulders  
Bring the gay festive hour.

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UP to this time, tailors, dressmakers, milliners, and jewellers, had actually been persecuted in a Christian land, to set off with proper costumes the actors who were to appear in the first grand scene of the season. Many private theatricals were gone through with, of which time and space would fail me to tell; and many parlor and shop dramas were enacted, to say nothing of the general gossip which filled up the interludes, as charming as a chiming orchestra. In fact, it is a high art, and one which is but little understood, that of dressing one's person properly. There is perfection in most every thing else but this; for in reality mankind dress no better now, than their ancestors did thousands of years ago.

In connection with the grand party given by Mr. Lec, I will just mention a few instances occurring under my own personal observation, which exemplify the efforts made by certain parties in the high art of dressing, as practised now-a-days.

Madam French declared she would not have this silk or that — as Miss Fraser had one of the same pattern.

Imagine her, then, spinning round like a silk-worm, sighing, alas, for what nobody else had got. She did not care. If the queen of England had a dress like it, she did not want it. She had been into Chandler's, and Hovey's, and Warren's never-failing store, and all the way up Winter street afoot, for they had no horse railroads there in those palmy days. She had run the gauntlet of all the dry goods stores, but all to no purpose. In fact, she was in great danger of representing Butler's immortal heroine. As good luck would have it, however, she happened to pop into a book-store by mistake, and so intent was she on what she was after, that she did not notice the change, but, posting up to the counter, which was heavy with books and periodicals, prominent among which was a book entitled "Nothing to Wear," innocently asked the clerk to show her his latest assortments of silks.

"I do not understand you, madam, I fear you have made a mistake, — this is a book-store. I have plenty of Flora McFlimsys just out, and selling rapidly."

"Of what did you say, sir. What kind of silks are McFlimsys?" inquired Madame French, not yet fully comprehending her situation.

"Pardon me, madam; I see now you have made a mistake. You have got to the wrong place."

"Why, dear me, sir! I never noticed. It's funny I should make such a mistake — please excuse me," — which request was followed by a hasty exit toward the door in front, and by half-suppressed titters and smothered laughter in the rear, which, by the time she had reached the sidewalk, exploded like a Vesuvius.

"Well, it's no wonder I should blunder into a book-store, when I have been into all the dry goods stores for nothing," she muttered to herself on the secluded sidewalk of Washington street, as she stood looking up to the windows of the book-store she had just left, and noticed a large placard hung up with the words "Nothing to Wear," printed in large black letters upon it, wondering at the same time what it meant, and thinking whether it would not look more appropriate in a dry goods store. "Well at last," Madam French remarked to herself, as she turned on her heel, "I think I will try a provision or grocery store next." At this witticism of her own she was laughing heartily, when who should she meet but Mr. Dasher, a well-known member of a prominent dry goods firm, with whom she was well acquainted. She briefly related the sad circumstances of her case, and was fast drawing around her a crowd of sympathizers, in the persons of Misses White, Brown, and other fashionable young ladies, who were also out shopping—and besieging fortifications of dry goods, which were generally carried by storm. Such a war, history has failed to record, but it deserves an honored place in the pages of romance. Take courage, then, ye knights of the yardstick, and cavaliers of the counter! for your efforts are not forgotten. In the cause of the fair sex you are gratefully remembered.

Mr. Dasher, having heard Miss French's wonderful, but melancholy story, wiped a smile away from his face with his pocket handkerchief, and invited her down to his wholesale rooms, and begged her to suit herself out of

silks just arrived per steamer, and never before opened, and out of which she might have the first choice. After looking them over for a couple of hours, Miss French chose one of a novel pattern, the whole piece of which she bought, containing something like fifty yards, which she thought quite sufficient to make a dress. This she selfishly did for the sake of having something original ; and she went home with a splendid appetite for a cold dinner, and as much contented as if she had just accepted the proposition of a seventy-year-old millionaire to become his wife.

Now Miss Jones, a lady of extensive family and of the finest taste, had been on the same tour, with about the same result ; and she had almost settled on the suicidal course of not going to the party at all. Reason though triumphed over fashion ; as she could not entertain the idea of the party breaking down on account of the absence of her supporting presence. She never wore a dress but once, so gossip said, but what she did with them all after they were worn out, was more than many could tell or conceive of. In fact, she had a better assortment of silks than the dry goods stores over which she went in rotation. Adjoining her room was an apartment dedicated to fashion, around which hung the silken robes with which, from time to time, she was wont to decorate her person. On an average, twice a day, she went up to this room, in the centre of which hung a huge mirror, and there she spent hours of deep meditation and thought on the great moral question of the world's bible, — what shall I wear, — which question often disturbed her in her



sleep, and broke in upon her sweetest dreams like a dreadful nightmare.

Miss Lane, the next in order, was rather more fortunate. She had but one dress which she declared good enough, and she had something else to do, sensible girl as she was, than to trot all over town for a bit of dry goods, and she settled herself down in perfect peace and comfort, without, perhaps, thanking her stars that she had such an easy, temperate disposition, which was not only natural and becoming, but also preëminently predisposing, which, on the sincere inquiry of a friend, "Well, Elsie, what are you going to wear to the party?" could laughingly reply, "I am going to wear my old dress, to see how favorably it will compare with others."

It was far different though with the Crowningshields, where there were three fair daughters of mother Eve. As a matter of course, they could not dress alike. The further apart they could get in dress, the better they were pleased. As they had decided upon something new, they went to work heartily to prepare for whatever novelty might appear. Every rainbow that had appeared during the last summer they had studied closely, to find out, if possible, which was the best hue, or to discover some new color born of the sky, which mortals might appropriate. Over the subject the three daughters had several serious encounters of words, while neither held out the flag of truce, and the subject at length assumed so serious an aspect, in this unique representation of the three graces, that it was almost a miracle that they still belonged to the same family afterward.

One young lady, whom I will not call by name, spent most of her time in trying to ascertain what our heroine was to wear; so that, by having the same dress, she would attract attention.

But gossip kept silent, and answered not an echo to the vain questioner. Nothing reliable could be found out from either dressmaker, jeweller, or servant girl. There are times when we feel the weight and worth of silence, and when not even gold or silver will circulate. In this case it was impolite and outrageous to seize such an opportunity to gratify personal pride and self-gratification, and it was equally absurd to think of rivalling Grace Lee by dress, merely, as she had qualities of mind and heart which thoroughly surpassed the base and selfish motives of the mere votaries of pleasure and fashion, who, satisfied with the outward pomp and trappings of life, care but little for its rich experience and realities, and are poor indeed.

In one instance, a young lady, whose father was reputed as worth an odd million or two, bought nearly fifty thousand dollars' worth of jewelry, laces, and silks, to eclipse all comers. And it was, indeed, an eclipse perfect, complete, and dazzling. Suffice it to say, however, that on the bills being sent in, they were put before the assignees of the millionaire's estate, and allowed the liberal dividend of twenty-five per cent. of their claims. In the list of assets the fair one, with her liberal dower, did not figure; as she suddenly sailed for Europe on getting wind of how affairs stood, thus leaving shipwreck and ruin behind her.

So much for the credit system, which is one of the greatest evils the world labors under.

Miss Lewis was not so fortunate. Her father's failure getting ahead of her calculations, the result was, that when the eventful night came, the young virgin's lamp was out. Those especial things purchased with so much care and time, did not appear in the fair scene; neither did the young lady who had so suddenly stepped from wealth to poverty.

Miss Campbell, who was placed in somewhat similar circumstances, and anxious to appear well, but more honest than some few, sent her spoils back to the owners, with a note stating how she was situated, which so touched their hearts, that they begged her to accept the mas a loan, and wear them on the occasion as an advertisement; which she accordingly did, much to the surprise of many who are always informed in regard to the family affairs of others. Their astonishment, however, soon died out, as, a few days afterwards, they saw certain articles in the jeweller's window, marked "for sale," from which they soon disappeared, and were quickly forgotten amid the world's baubles.

Many more cases might be mentioned, but, passing on, we must briefly notice the gentlemen. But little in fact can be said in praise of their dress. Fortunately they have but few jewels and diamonds, and precious little silk to wear. The lords of creation, in fact, are but princes of cotton and homespun. They have to buy, though, a great deal for the better half of creation, which may be called the ladies' tax, which the

sterner and more moneyed sex pay with pleasure and delight, and that, too, several times a year. Think of that ! ye grumblers, who growl like lions, crouched over your money-boxes at the city tax, which only comes once a year ! It is really a pity that some such men, who are so wealthy, were not so poor as to be unable to pay even a poll-tax.

In regard to the coming event in the fashionable world, there was no end to the paragraphs which from time to time appeared in the daily papers, heralding the rising of a bright particular star, which was so soon to take its place in its earthly sphere. The horizon of many eyes was bounded only by the walls of William Lee's reception room. Not a few passed through untold agonies and unheard of experiences, in order to obtain an invitation. In well-known words "they were of the immortal few," while the many disappointed ones had no such consolation, "for they were born to die."

Grace Lee, however, remained untroubled. She saw and heard but little of the rumor and gossip which hover like insatiable vultures around the giddy vortex of wealth and fashion, in which so many are swallowed up. Standing as Grace did on the margin of the realities of life, in the fulness of her radiant youth, she knew but little of the vanity and temptation of the world ; and on the coming occasion, of which she was to be the centre of attraction, she cared less of herself than of others ; for she had been educated to look upon earthly things in their true light, and at best as but fading and transitory. The friendship and esteem of those who loved her, she valued

more highly than all the wealth of which she was sole heiress ; and she looked at parties, balls, and social gatherings, as means, not for personal display or gratification merely, but for higher and nobler ends, such as the interchange of feelings and sentiments, the well-informed and eloquent conversation, and the worthy attachments formed and welded together in sweet friendship and love.

Thus, where others lost, our heroine gained, through the true proportions of her character, which, with full-rounded orbit, dipped into the space of circumstances, attracting to itself the real and substantial good, which only truly great minds are able to reach and smelt from the vast amount of dross which surrounds it. Along the shore of life we will walk awhile, hand in hand, with Grace Lee, as she will be an agreeable companion, who may or may not be duplicated by the living and breathing reality.

## CHAPTER IV.

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To dance and flirt and gossip,  
And fill up life's leisure hours.

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THE morning sun shone brightly on town and city, while in the clear dome of heaven not a cloud was visible.

Early in the morning the family carriage of the Lees was on its way, from the window of which looked out the fresh, rosy countenance of Grace, who, on this particular morning, looked more beautiful than ever. Each day that passed over her left its blessing on her head, and its golden benediction of peace and joy in her heart. The thoughts of her parents were fixed in love upon her, while in secret they prayed that no sorrow or blight might dim that beauty, or put out the light of the hopeful and trusting spirit.

In the afternoon the invited guests arrived, as carriage after carriage of wealth and beauty rolled up, and deposited their precious burdens at the stately mansion which received them with open doors. Proceeding across the spacious hall, the guests were ushered into the grand reception room, which fairly blazed with beauty and elegance. On the entrance of the guests, they were met by Mr. and Mrs. Lee on one side, and by Grace and

EVAN DALE.

Lizzie on the other, when the usual greetings and introductions took place.

Reader! have you ever been in a crowded room, and experienced the awful predicament of having no one to speak to; seeming for the time a wonder to yourself and others, and appearing like a beleaguered fort, the only escape from which was an ignominious exit by the front door, with the danger of a fire in the rear from the startled garrison? If so, I leave you to your honest and conscientious reflections.

Passing over, in this case, many such instances, there presently arose from all quarters the hum and buzz of female gossip, which arose to its full and happy tide, rippling with the sound of busy lips and voices, engaged in agreeable converse, interrupted now and then by trumpet peals of laughter, which told that some shots in the battle of words had taken immediate effect.

Numerous and varied were the topics of conversation, but on one subject they were nearly unanimous, which, in the words of Mrs. Langdon, probably found its fittest expression, as she remarked to Mrs. Lawner, that Miss Grace was perfectly beautiful, and a young lady of remarkable good sense and amiability.

"Why, Mrs. Langdon, I really love her as if she was my own child; and then to think of what a fine education she has;" and here Mrs. Lawner sank back in her seat, and gave a long sigh, wishing that her son was only present, that she might introduce him to the beautiful and accomplished heiress.

"I say, Mrs. Stevens," remarked Mrs. Crawford, "do

you believe there are angels on earth? If so, Grace Lee is one of them. I never dreamed she was half so pretty a girl."

"She is not only that, Mrs. Crawford, but also good and kind as she is beautiful; which is more than can be said of most of our city belles. It is just as cousin Henry says, the pretty girls are very rare, and if he was to look for a wife now, he should not know where to find one, poor fellow."

"That is doubtless true enough, Mrs. Stevens; for very rarely do you see a beautiful person accompanied by corresponding beauty of mind and heart. In this respect, from all that her most intimate friends say, Grace Lee must be rarely gifted. Judging by ourselves, and the generality of people, Mrs. Stevens, I declare it is really refreshing in these homely-faced times to see a really handsome person. Did you ever hear Grace sing or play?"

"I do not think I have had that pleasure," replied Mrs. Stevens. "Well, you will probably hear her, then, to-night. Such music! It beats all the angel music I ever heard of. Ah me! talk of Grace's singing and playing,—just look here Mrs. Stevens, and say if these pictures of Grace's are not drawn and painted with a master hand! Look at this bunch of grapes, and confess if it does not tempt your fingers to pluck a few of the purple beauties. I almost doubt whether they belong to the garden of art or nature, or whether there are such beautiful things to eat at all."

Leaving this party, we pass on through the brilliant as-



semblage, until we come to three young ladies grouped together, and the trio are having a lively time by themselves, comparing notes. They were very busily engaged in a delightful conversation, which ever and anon started forth a joke or witticism from under cover, seemingly at somebody or other's expense. Most of the conversation of the young lady gossips was carried on in low whispers or guarded tones, with an occasional look furtively cast around them, to guard against being robbed by surprise of their very valuable secrets. Their denunciations of Grace Lee were complete and overwhelming. Her beauty and attainments were far below their comprehension. Miss Yale, one of the three, called her proud and affected, with nothing but her good looks to recommend her. Miss Barton, another of the three, broke in unexpectedly with the question, if she had got a beau yet? Miss Wheaton, the third and last in order of the interesting group, concluded that if she had got a beau, he would have an eye on her father's money-bags, while she sighed, wishing herself the only daughter of a very rich papa, so that she could get married forthwith. In this manner the light-headed gossips went swimmingly on. They knew but little of Grace Lee, and, according to their knowledge, so was their judgment. When the eye is imperfect, all that it sees will be imperfect also.

Old Mrs. Wells, who sat just behind the young gossips, was of the opinion that a good many young ladies were in the habit of talking about those they knew but little of; and a busybody and gossip she hated with a perfect hatred. She utterly detested any one who could do

nothing but pick flaws in other peoples' characters, as if some few were made perfect for others to find deficiencies in, and thus try the problem of how much humanity would bear.

Mrs. Phelps was of the same opinion, and turned up her virtuous hands in holy horror at the thought, that such well-dressed young ladies should say aught in malice or envy of any one, least of all against Grace Lee, whom she had known from childhood.

Whether the three young ladies were of the same opinion is very doubtful, as, after glancing around them, they left for other parts, where they would be safer from an attack in the rear.

"Miss Yale," remarked Miss Wheaton, as soon as they had reached quarters where there were no old women around,— "Don't you know old Mrs. Phelps? She talked as if she was the grandmother of all three of us."

"I don't care," remarked Miss Barton, "she's an old fudge anyhow. She has probably forgotten the time when she was a young lady, and made the same observations."

Ah! young ladies, it takes an old gunner to bring the young birds down!

As for Miss Yale, she thought it cruel and outrageous that such old people should come into society on purpose to plague young people, and prevent them from enjoying themselves.

With this expression of disrespect for their elders, in which they all coincided, they were soon lost again in

their favorite element, and they so far forgot themselves as to draw toward them the special attention of Mrs. Lee, who calmly reminded them that they could, if they desired, have her gracious permission to retire, and she would excuse them for the rest of the evening.

By degrees, as the young lady gossips got more acquainted with the merits of Grace, they were utterly astounded at the attainments of which truth, and not rumor, pronounced her capable. Comparing their own with them, they were all the more insignificant; while the well-merited rebuke of Mrs. Lee added only to their shame and mortification; and they would gladly have escaped from the room, if they could have done so without remark or notice.

Who shall dare dispute that the conduct of these three young ladies, on this particular occasion, affected very much their future destiny? When we are doing wrong, especially in social life, we little think who is observing us. Those witnesses may be our best friends or bitterest enemies. There are some, however, who enjoy themselves in appearing ridiculous before the eyes of sensible people, but it is often an expensive pleasure. On a silly act, or a foolish remark, has hinged many a destiny. The conduct of a brief hour has often turned the scale of life.

“Why, I declare, Mrs. Hartshorn! you come upon us all of a sudden, like a hunter scouting for game,” remarked Mrs. Turner.

“Oh pray, Mrs. Turner, don’t be frightened. I have no bad news to startle you, — presume you are in ecstasies

on this delightful occasion ; but what do you think of Grace Lee ? Isn't she charming ? ”

“ That question, I suppose, the young gentlemen present could answer the best,” replied Mrs. Turner. I feel for her, though, as if she was my own daughter. In fact, I never see a pretty young lady but what I feel anxious in regard to her future welfare.”

“ Matrimonially, I suppose you mean, Mrs. Turner.”

“ Exactly so, Mrs. Hartshorn. There are so many things that attract the young, and so few of them choose well their lot.”

“ Have you heard the rumor, that she has already chosen, Mrs. Turner ? ”

“ No, you don't say so, Mrs. Hartshorn ; who can it be ? ”

“ Some say Mr. Porter the broker, while others say Mr. Lauren the banker.”

“ I don't believe a word of it, Mrs. Hartshorn. It's nothing in the world but rumor. It's got to be so nowadays, that a young lady can hardly step out doors, out of her teens, without the cry at her heels 'she's engaged.' And then, just as if Grace Lee is obliged to marry a wealthy banker or broker. I would not be very much surprised if Grace Lee marries one of the poorest men in Christendom yet, if she loves him.”

“ I suppose, Mrs. Turner, you have not a doubt but what she will marry somebody.”

“ Being married ourselves, I do not see as we can reasonably doubt it, Mrs. Hartshorn, seeing that we both have proved the reality. In fact, Mrs. Hartshorn, a hand-

some and wealthy young lady, nowadays, has a mighty poor chance of being an old maid."

"I suppose, Mrs. Turner, there are many mothers here who are considerably exercised as to who Grace Lee will give her fair hand and sweet heart to, with all the etceteras that go along with her."

"Never mind, Mrs. Hartshorn, as you and I are not so fortunate as to have sons of our own, we can dismiss all maternal anxiety on that score, and look to our daughters to provide for us in this respect. What say you to that?"

"Oh, it is perfectly pleasing to think of, Mrs. Turner. There's my dear Angeline has not got a beau yet. I shall have to hurry the girl up. I do not see what she is thinking of. I'm afraid Grace Lee will get all of them, and then what a fix the young ladies will be in. What a cry there will be in the matrimonial market. Plenty of stock, but no takers, — many good-looking and nice young ladies, all ready to marry, but no beaus."

At this witticism the whole social circle, round about, became convulsed with laughter, and not a few of the young ladies in the immediate vicinity showed, by their crimson blushes, that it was duly appreciated more for its fun than its truth.\*

Having exhausted the main topic of conversation, the brilliant assemblage discussed various general subjects.

\* For these delicate bits of information, the author is gratefully indebted to the correspondent of the "Gazette of Fashion," and also to the reporter of the "Daily and Evening Style," both of whom, having their statements duly indorsed, hold themselves responsible.

Some reviewed the various specimens of humanity present, while others took a more literary turn, talking of books and authors as if they were living encyclopedias. Fashion, though, had the most numerous votaries in the lively chit-chat, comprising most every item from the highest authority, down to what the milliner and dressmaker or tailor said last, *a la mode*; but after all, no answer was obtained to the question, What is the style? To it not even an echo answered.

One young lady, who delighted in her strength of mind and spread of intellect, and whose full, broad forehead, would probably be marked six and upwards in some travelling phrenologist's catechism, declared to Miss Suter, that she devoured all the novels as fast as they came out. As to their merits, she was sharp and searching. She spoke well only of those that pleased her, but against all others she warned her friends of the awful things they contained, which were perfectly frightful and horrid to think of. She was much excited over the last new novel, which had created quite a sensation, so much so as almost to turn society from its foundation, in its efforts to find out the author, as nothing but the name of "Rowley" relieved the solitary whiteness of the titlepage of the volume on which fame had set its seal.

This young lady, of a literary turn of mind, would have much liked the popularity and money which Rowley had brought in to its fortunate writer. In addition to this young lady's merit as a reader, many accused her of courting the muses; for now and then in the waste and desert places of city and out-town papers, bloomed the

full, early wild flowers of her poetical effusions. She also stood accused of writing sweet, pretty things, on St. Valentine's day, to charming and nice young men, a virtue or sin which, I fear, few of the young ladies of the present day possess.

Many, who had been introduced to Grace Lee, took her for a very charming and pretty young lady, knowing not the solid jewels contained within so fair a casket; and of this number was our literary young lady, who had fallen into the same error, which was soon effaced; for Grace coming along near where she stood, began a lively conversation with Miss Blanchard in French, which Madam Literary could in nowise understand, for she had just graduated with honor from a fashionable boarding-school, where they studied French, but were not obliged to learn it; for, in fact, to ask the plain question, what is the use of American young ladies learning French, unless they are going to marry Frenchmen?

Not being able to take part in the French conversation, so near her, Miss Literary, *alias* Miss Day, looking around her, and perceiving herself alone in the wide universe, slid over to the sheltering presence of Miss Deshon, who was fully able to talk a little English with her, by way of consolation.

"Well, Miss Deshon," said Miss Day, "you looked rather lonesome, and I thought I would come and keep you company."

"Yes, I am somewhat lonesome," replied Miss Deshon. "I am like a solitary tree in the wilderness. Pray how do you enjoy yourself, Miss Day?"

"First-rate, I assure you, Miss Deshon. As much so as if I had just come from France *via* Isle of Man."

"What's that, Miss Day? I don't understand you. You are utterly incomprehensible in your figures of speech."

"Well, I will tell you, Miss Deshon. Grace Lee and Miss Murden are talking the most awful mixed up mess of language I ever heard; all in that horrid French, to avoid which I often staid at home from school, on the plea of a sick headache. Dear me, if I hear much more French to-night I shall have to go to France, or back to my boarding-school to learn it. Ah! Miss Deshon, I did not think—they may have something private which would not sound well spoken in English."

"Very likely, Miss Day; you have perhaps touched the spring of a mystery now, but you may not be able to make it yield without an interpreter. It is no uncommon thing, though, for Grace Lee to talk in French, and, in fact, five or six other different languages, and she finds it a rare pleasure to meet with any one who can talk well with her in them."

"You don't say! Miss Deshon. You surprise me. It is perfectly astounding. I shall have to give up immediately,"—and here Miss Day came very near giving up the ghost in a fainting fit, and she would have succeeded, if it had not been for a fan, and also a window, which some disinterested and highly benevolent individual just then opened especially for this occasion.\*

\* The author would here make general answer to all the anxious inquiries after Miss Day and her precious health, by stating, with her kind per-



In another corner of the room was a highly interesting group, modest withal, and deeply engaged in commenting on certain domestic and matrimonial matters.

"Miss Hooton," inquired Miss Mowry, "have you heard how Bell Clinton likes her husband?"

"Why Miss Mowry, what a funny question," laughingly replied Miss Hooton. "What put it in your head to ask such a question? If you had asked me how she likes the dress she's got on, or the bonnet she wore last Sunday to church, I might tell you; but, dear me, to ask how a young lady likes her husband, makes me laugh; I can't help it."

"A young lady, like Bell Clinton, ought to know, after she has been married a week, I think, Miss Hooton, and more than that, her friends ought to know too."

"There's another question I can ask you, Miss Mowry, and that is, How does Bell Clinton's husband like his wife? If you will find out the true answer to this question, I will correctly answer the question you put to me. There is one thing though, Miss Mowry, which we must not forget, and that is this: if single young ladies trouble themselves much about the affairs of married people, they will never get married."

"There is one other idea you must bear in mind," broke in Mrs. Colby, who had overheard the conversation.

"What is that?" inquired Miss Mowry.

mission, that she will be able, at a later hour, to take her usual part in the dance and other festivities, her indisposition being merely of a temporary nature.

"It is this," replied Mrs. Colby. "It is no common every-day affair to be married. It is serious and solemn. It is not for the brief wedding day nor the honey-moon, but for all life."

"Certainly," replied Miss Mowry, "I agree with you there, but I do not see how such a handsome young man as Mr. Warren should fancy Bell Clinton so much as to love her. I cannot understand what there is about her so attractive."

"True, Miss Mowry," replied Mrs. Colby; "but love admits no third person into its charming secrets. No mortal interpreter can stand between two loving hearts to tell, or even hint at the why or wherefore. We sometimes say that he or she might have made a better choice, but it was not to be. Love works in the deep channels of destiny, from which float out often, on the tide of life, kindred barks with bridal sails, which seem strangely suited to each other, but which, nevertheless, sail along beautifully together, under a blessed and benign influence."

"And then again, Miss Mowry, the lover you rejected, Miss Hooton might accept of. What one woman loves, another throws away as worthless, because she cannot see its beauty or fitness. What one rejects as beyond her regard, another picks up and wears as her richest jewel."

Nearly in the centre of the room the piano was now rolled out, and to it Grace Lee sat down, and, after playing in her best style a waltz of Gungl's, and a symphony of Beethoven's, struck out in the simple melody of "Home, sweet Home," which she accompanied by the

sweeter tones of her own clear and matchless voice, after which she sung "In Happy Hours," which was also finely rendered, and called forth the delight and astonishment of her friends who, probably, in the words of Madam Gazel, "never heard sweeter singing or more beautiful playing." They were so much pleased with this performance of Grace Lee's, that she was obliged to yield to their entreaties to resume her seat at the piano, and this time she played and sang by particular request, the new songs, "Summer's Last Rose is Blooming" and "The Pearl of Home," which were rendered so well, that not a few, forgetful of the place and occasion, indulged in a custom of modern times, clapping their hands enthusiastically in praise of the fair musician.\*

After Grace had finished, Mrs. Lamar declared she would rather hear Miss Lee sing and play than any foreigner, for foreigners sang only for dollars, while Grace Lee sung to please and entertain, a virtue to which foreign singers have not yet arrived, and in regard to which our American public commits so many errors and absurdities. Alas! when will foreign musicians understand and appreciate the musical taste of us Americans?

"True, Mrs. Lamar," replied Mrs. Granger; "that's so and more too; especially of those after whom many in our country have run mad, and loaded down with gifts and honors, and looked up to them as if they were gods and goddesses, but who, in their own land, were only second or third-rate artists at best."

\* The author is not informed as to where the piano, used on this particular occasion, came from.

"I do not dissent from you there, Mrs. Granger," replied Mrs. Lamar, "not at all. We do not encourage our own talent enough. How charming, for instance, Grace Lee would look in opera."

"Indeed, Mrs. Lamar, that she would, certainly. But come, they are going down to supper."

Here the two musical critics arose, and with the rest, wended their way to the dining-room, and the reception-hall was left without a tenant. The march to the tea-table, down the broad staircase, was somewhat tedious, owing to the extent of modern fashions. Now and then a modest command, "get off my dress, please," was duly heeded and obeyed; and the offender, on asking pardon, was immediately and very politely forgiven. In fact, ladies' laws are generally good for nothing, and have happily but few, if any, penalties attached to them, and it is rather expected some one will break them, if only the right ones, for it is full as delightful as to keep them.

## CHAPTER V.

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Truly good is our host and hostess.

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THE dining-room of the Lee mansion was nearly as large as the parlor, and intended for large gatherings. The family dining-room, which was smaller, connected with it by a sliding door, which, when open, slid back into the wall, so that the whole area, with windows at each end, was presented to the view of the admiring guests.

Three rows of tables, not of clapboards, but of solid mahogany, were arranged the whole length of the room, which glittered with gold and silver ware in costly profusion, which contained the more acceptable eatables which were furnished by a celebrated savant, who, having retired with a snug, but conveniently large fortune from business, appeared in his professional character once more, and for "this time only," to please Miss Grace Lee and her friends; and he was determined to do his best in every thing connected with the culinary science. Soon the interesting discussion of food *versus* appetite began. Not to give the bill of fare, which was truly epicurean, I would merely remark, that in eating and drinking, which are the most necessary, as well as the most homely of

human employments, most every style and form was indulged in, from the highest superb etiquette, down to the common kind of etceteras which attend mastication. Though not wishing to go very deep into the highly interesting case of knife *versus* fork, yet it does seem to me that each is well fitted for its use, while both are equally polite, as much so as any dumb things can be. It cannot but be apparent, though, that a fork is the worst medium of transportation for some uncertain and treacherous articles of food; and, when so used, often incurs the danger of shipwreck and miscarriage and miscellaneous landing, either in your own lap, or that of your neighbor. Oh the many and mortifying disasters which have occurred at other people's tables in the endeavor to be polite and fastidious! Romance has recorded but few of these, yet they are nevertheless numerous. Three wise men of Gotham went to sea in a bowl, so we are told, and, in fact, it was a laudable enterprise compared with many others. There are some in these days of good staunch vessels, who go to sea in frailer barks even than that, expecting, perhaps, that the pronged trident of Neptune will hold them up by their clothes, till they reach some good sunny port. None but the worldly wise would put to sea on any such pretensions, or use a fork in cases where the broadside of a knife, or the scoop of a spoon, is both better and more convenient, and, as to the gentility of either of the three implements in question, I will merely say, to excuse them, that it is not polite to eat at all, for the art of eating is at best a low and vulgar attainment,

and one which classes mankind with animals and beasts. Tell me, — did not our first parents lose paradise by eating ?

Miss Willoughby, who esteemed herself a polite eater, really murdered sundry delicate articles of food by the remorseless prongs of her fork, but when the beautiful silk dress she wore, showed several highly-colored stains here and there, as the result of her fastidious politeness, the “murder of the innocents” was amply revenged, and exit home of Miss Willoughby, was duly enacted, as was the case with some others. Pity that young ladies should be obliged to leave for home before the ball and dance comes off, just because they have been too polite over their eatables. If, dear reader, you have any of the frothy milk of human kindness, think of those who on this occasion, eat their soup, and chowders, and such light articles, with a fork, for need of a more genial and practical politeness. Think, also, of those who had no appetites, or for want of better ones, encumbered their plates with the shattered dainties and ruins of eatables which would feed many hungry.

After tea was over, Grace treated her guests with cake made by herself, which was highly appreciated. Mr. Lee, rather pleased at this part of the performance, and determining not to be outdone by his own sweet daughter, posted down cellar and brought up a bottle which many wondered what he was going to do with. Having opened it, he next procured Grace’s gold thimble, and filling it full of the ruby wine, drank to the health of the company, after which, each partook to the health of them-

selves and others. In those days, every liquor law was carried out to the letter, which probably accounts for the extreme temperance manifested on this occasion, which is well worthy of being recorded. The truth was, that the wine having been bottled up a great many years, had so improved in strength and quality, that they could drink but little of it. It seemed, in fact, like the nectar from the far off fountains of immortal youth.

Old Mrs. Thaxter probably took this view, as she remarked, she thought she should live ten years longer on the strength of it.

"I suppose it makes you feel younger, Mrs. Thaxter, or don't you care about it," remarked Mrs. Wheeler.

"Oh, I should like to be young again, but not in this world," replied Mrs. Thaxter.

Grace Lee, who happened to hear this remark, suggested the opposite extreme, by remarking, in a naive and quiet way, that she would not like to be old in this world.

"Ah, my dear Grace," said Mrs. Thaxter, "you may live long enough to reach that period, but you can keep your heart young, so that when the winter of life comes, you can sit in a sunny room with a pleasant fire on the hearthstone, and sweet friends beside you."

"What do you think of that, Grace?" asked her father, who had observed the conversation. "Is that not a pleasant prospect? Is it not well worth growing old for? only think of it, Grace!"

"Of what, father?"

"Why, your kind friends, here, have drank your



health for the next thousand years, in your own gold thimble."

Here, Grace's countenance shed one of her sweetest smiles over the company, which arose with Mrs. Lee from the table, and proceeded up again to the reception room to receive the gentlemen who were soon expected.

Foremost among the arrivals was Hon. Mr. Bradbury, of New York, to whom much attention was paid, on account of his political station, he being one of the glorious minority who are so fortunate as to fill a senatorship.

"What kind of a ship, did you say?" inquired Mrs. Barrow, whose understanding just at that time was not quite equal to her hearing.

"Why, a senatorship," replied Mrs. Gaines.

"Oh, a senatorship indeed, Mrs. Gaines. Thank you for refreshing my memory. I should like to know though, what kind of a ship that is? I've heard tell of whale, and steamships, and sailing vessels, but a senatorship must be a peculiar kind of craft?"

"Exactly so, Mrs. Barrow," replied Mrs. Gaines, regardless of the smiles awakened around her.

Mr. Bradbury's salute to Grace, as she came forward to receive it, was one of great politeness and respect.

"Are you very fond of public life at Washington?" inquired Grace of Mr. Bradbury, after the formal introductions were over.

"Well, not particularly so," replied Mr. Bradbury. "I like some other cities far better for every-day life, and yet, to one's view and mind, Washington presents many places and scenes of interest and pleasure, not soon to be

forgotten. In other words, Miss Lee, Washington being the capital, there is seen the dignity and grandeur of our great Republic, and the scene here to-night, which, by your kindness I am happy to witness, reminds me of the brilliant gatherings we have from time to time in the star city."

"Then you will not feel lost, Mr. Bradbury?"

"Oh no, Miss Lee, one is never lost when in good company. But here comes the Governor. I wonder if he is so happily situated. Judging by his smiles, he is very well pleased with his happy subjects around him.

"Why, how do you do Mr. Bradbury? and how is my old, or rather young friend, Grace?" inquired the Governor.

"Remarkably well for one of my years," replied Grace.

"A truly republican answer, Grace. I declare, Mr. Bradbury, it is some honor to be Governor, with such an orderly and well-disposed subject as Miss Lee. I would not wish to exchange subjects, Mr. Bradbury, even with New York.

"I would not advise you to, Governor, at all," replied Grace.

"Oh no, Miss Lee, certainly not. It is for your especial benefit that I am induced to take the office for another year."

"If you can get it, Governor. It is very generous in you, however, to think of me in the least; but I see just how it is," replied Grace. "However, Governor, I would not advise many to vote for you. You know some-

body else would do as well, and, perhaps, better. If they allowed the ladies to vote, I for one might vote for somebody else. What do you think of that bit of treason, Governor?"

"Oh, it is very pleasant and refreshing to contemplate, Miss Lee, and if I had no one else but you to vote, I should no doubt be elected by an overwhelming majority. I confess I feel in some danger of being defeated."

"Do not be discouraged, Governor, in the least, for you know I am not in the habit of voting."

"That is something indeed to be thankful for, Miss Lee. I would really like though to see the State government carried on for a year by the ladies, just to see what a piece of work they would make with it."

"That would not be long enough, Governor. One year would hardly be a fair trial. I've no doubt we should pass some very stringent laws."

"That might be, Miss Lee," replied the Governor, "but the rub would be to carry them out."

"We should get over that, Governor, very easily. We would pass laws that would enforce themselves."

Just here, the Governor, with Mr. Bradbury and Grace in company, passed over to the opposite side of the room, where the Governor introduced them to his friend Mr. Harvard, who had just arrived.

"Why, Governor," remarked Mr. Harvard, "I am happy to see you in such good society. If I had not been introduced to Miss Lee, I might have taken her for your wife."

"You know, Harvard, you could not have made such

a mistake. I would not advise Miss Lee to marry any such man." "How long have you been in the city, Mr. Bradbury?" inquired Mr. Harvard.

"Some few weeks, Mr. Harvard. I did intend leaving the city last week, but I caught a whisper in the wind of the good time coming, and I thought I would stay and prove the truth of what the poet remarks."

"Well done, Mr. Bradbury," said Mr. Harvard. "I see you have good cause to be a firm believer in that peculiar doctrine."

"I am for this evening, Mr. Harvard, but the trouble with the good time is, that it is always going," replied Mr. Bradbury.

"Going! why you are not going yet, Mr. Bradbury?" inquired Grace.

"No, Miss Lee, I did not speak of going home. I trust I shall stay long enough to have a dance with you."

"Oh, certainly, Mr. Bradbury; but you must be on hand. I give you fair warning. First comer is first claimer."

This rule of Grace's was generally known among the young men present, not by special promulgation, but by the disappointment of many who, on application for the honor of Grace's hand for the first dance, received the unequivocal answer, that the first on the ground, just before the beginning of the dance, should have the post of honor. By this rule, many who dreamed of appropriating Grace to themselves exclusively, were somewhat disappointed, and their faith in certain powers thereby shaken.

There was considerable speculation as to who would be the favored one of time and place, but they found no satisfactory answer or relief.

"There, that is just like Miss Lee for all the world. Pretty girls are always up to some deviltry," remarked Hugh Curtis to his friend, Phillip Locke.

"What difference does it make, Hugh, who dances with her first, as long as it is neither you nor me. Her dancing with some other fine young gentleman first, is not a-going to spoil her for the after comers, not at all. Some young men here to-night, by the way they feel, think, perhaps, that Grace Lee is going to lose her beauty all of a sudden, and live an old maid all her days, if she does not dance with them first. For one, I had just as lives stand back, and take the after chances. In fact, Hugh, I should rather be the last young man that danced with her than the first one. In a good many things in this world the last chances are decidedly the best."

"Yes, Phil, but you are not sure of getting them. For one, I hardly care whether she dances with any one or not. She is a deuced pretty girl, though, for some young fellow now, let me remind you, Phil."

"Pooh, Hugh! She is not the only pretty girl I have seen, by a long chalk. I advise you not to fall in love with her, if she is so mighty pretty."

"Do not discourage me, Phil."

"Not at all, Hugh, I think we have talked remarkably encouraging on the subject to each other."

"To take a poetical view of the subject, Phil, Grace

Lee is like a beautiful fortress, surrounded by many besiegers, but unlike others, it has only one point of access, and that is so strongly guarded, that he who attacks, and carries it, finds himself henceforth a prisoner within its walls, and bound by the chains and fetters of love, stronger than those made of the hardest iron."

"It would indeed be a pleasant captivity, Hugh, in the keep of Grace Lee's affections. He would have all the money he wanted to spend, very likely."

"Nonsense, Phil! In winning Grace Lee, you must not think of her father's money-bags at all. It does not follow that you will have them, even if you are so fortunate as to get Grace. In my humble opinion, you will get neither one, so what is the use of speculating. There are any quantity of suitors here to-night, Phil, all ready to slip in and fill up the vacant place beside her."

"For all that, Hugh, Grace Lee is not going to be carried off out of the matrimonial market in a hurry, or before her time, or without looking around her. She is free to all, and free to choose. There are no cousins, or family relations, or particular friends since childhood, and her parents are remarkably kind and sensible. They would not be snarly, or grouty, in case a handsome and worthy young man like yourself, Hugh, should happen to have the welfare of their daughter so heavily at heart, as to take her, for better or worse."

"As to that, Phil, I think whoever takes the responsibility of Grace Lee upon himself, takes her for the better."

"I'll bet, Hugh, you are already in love with her yourself."

"What, in love with her, Phil? A pretty charge to bring against a worthy, single-minded man like myself. I would not quite yet exchange my freedom for fifty Grace Lees all in a bunch. That's so, every time, Phil. I should think over the matter some time before I even exchanged it for one Grace Lee, as a young man's liberty is oftentimes worth a vast sight more than a pretty young lady is able to pay for it. Besides, a young man must be up to neck in love, to have a young lady, before he is very well acquainted with her."

"If you heard her speak, the charm might be broken."

"Very well said, Hugh, but look here! do you remember the two young ladies we were introduced to the other evening? They are over there, looking this way, and probably casting around for some one to dance with them."

And thus the two young men, as if tired of each other's company, sought their antipodes on the opposite side of the room.

Another young man named Groventor, who had just graduated with extinguished honors from the lower part of his class at college, was enthusiastic in his praise of the beautiful heiress. Being a thorough specimen of a city coxcomb, with nothing remarkable about him, save his fine broadcloth, and a ponderous watch chain, well hung with seals and charms, he was, in his own estimation, quite a handsome fellow, and troubled at times with the idea, that all the prettiest young ladies were after him, Grace

Lee in particular. Superficial in mind and character, and uninteresting in appearance, he was a fair sample of the worthless young men who are so plenty in all our cities, and who, if their parents were only poor or in barely moderate circumstances, might be worth something both to themselves and others. Affluence, genteel dissipation, and a liberal education so called, had done for him what it has for so many young men in the same circumstances, so that in life's morning he was the wreck only or what he might have been,—and old Mrs. Brunell's remark, uttered just then, was very true, which was, "that it was a great pity that people who had children could not bring them up to something better, besides smoking cigars and driving fast horses and the like."

"I say, Frank," said Grovenor to his friend, who just then joined him, "Isn't Grace Lee a superlative creature?"

"Just so, Grovenor, superlative, more so, and most superlative. That is as far as I can go, either on adjectives or adverbs, on that subject; but, by zounds! I shall have to go further, for I'll be beat on grammar and every other science, the stars included, if there isn't Jim Miller talking with her. Let's go over there and take a part in the conversation. It's public and free to all, you know."

So pulling his friend along by the button, the two young men struck a bee line for Grace Lee's present locality, arriving in time to hear, but not to understand, as the conversation between Grace and Mr. Miller was in German, which mystical language our two young men could not understand, and so nonplussed, and not daring



to put in a word of English edgeways, they modestly withdrew, highly displeased.

"I say, Frank, remarked Grovenor, that is a pretty lingo to talk in before company."

"I am exceedingly sorry, Grovenor," replied Frank, "that Grace Lee is so well educated. She's not the girl for us ignoramuses, if we have been to college and graduated."

"What in time, though, has Miss Willard got on, that makes her look so, Frank? Can you tell?"

"What matters it, Grovenor, as long as she dresses decent? If there is any thing which you see out of order in her dress or toilet, be a true knight, and gallantly tell the young lady of the defect, since you have been so fortunate as to discover it; or, if you think it too hazardous a subject to meddle with, get some of your numerous lady friends to delicately broach the matter. If, Grovenor, there was something out of order in Grace Lee's dress, some lace or ribbon loose, or some jewel or flower threatening to secede, you would be mighty glad of an opportunity to be the only one to rush to the rescue, and tell her of it. But Grace is no such careless girl as that, to have things hanging round her. If a young man had to wait for that opportunity, his chances would be long-winded. It is not every young man, though, who can flirt with an heiress. It may be our chances, however, are as good as the average. Pooh! it will not do us any great harm if we do suffer from the heart fever a little, for it is soon over. There are enough pretty girls as good as I wish for. If a pretty girl makes you sick at heart, take another pretty

girl and cure it. If one gives you the mitten, take care the next time that the other gives you her hand." With this parting advice Frank separated from his friend to look after his interest in another direction.

"See here, Bob! There is the girl you would like to have," said Mr. Bartlett to his young scapegrace of a nephew, who was just then looking around for a wife.

"Who did you say, uncle?"

"Why, Bob, who do you suppose I mean?"

"I don't know, uncle, as you did not name her. I must remind you there are several young ladies here, all ready to be married, I presume."

"Why, Bob, how dull you are. I refer to Grace Lee, to be sure. I would give all I am worth for such a daughter."

"I really wish she was your daughter, uncle, it would be so pleasant to be a cousin to her."

"Then you would like to cousin her round, Robert?"

"I don't think I could object at all, uncle."

Robert Waldron, for this was the young man's name, was rather of an aristocratic class, which, I am sorry to say, is larger than it should be. At an early age he had been adopted by his bachelor uncle, and brought up as his child, and heir to his property, which was considerable; and the position this circumstance gave him, caused him to be favored more for the wealth of the world he was heir to, than for his qualities of mind and heart, which, in many respects, were mean and despicable.

At about just such a time in the day, when the most young ladies were sure to be out, there might have been

seen, not two horsemen as James has it, but a one horseman, dressed in a cockney suit, this same Bob Waldron, with a handsome stud of bay horses before him, driving in all his pomp down the Western Avenue. To some people, there is nothing in this world like driving fast horses, the faster the better. In fact, it seems as if they were made, or were fit for nothing else, and this was one of Robert Waldron's chief delights. Often he appeared before an appreciative public on horseback, a solitary rider, and, perhaps he might have been one of the two, seen in the same place before; suffice it to say, that many young ladies with tender feelings, admired him for his gallant figure, and extolled him for the daring equestrian feats of which he was sometimes capable. In his secret mind, he no doubt considered himself the beau ideal of all that was good and perfect in man. Many young men have thought this same thing before, but still, the advertisement reads in all the world's busy places, "Wanted One Good Young Man." I hardly need say, that the position will probably never be filled.

Here the band, which had just arrived, suddenly struck up a favorite quickstep, by which the company arranged themselves, and were soon lost in the winding ways of the mazy dance. In the first dance, there were some rather strange alliances and partnerships, for a limited time, equal in strangeness and singularity to many in real life. Grace got for her first partner, not the handsomest young man in the room, but her Uncle Derby instead, a jolly old man of a sixty-year-old lease of life, who thus in his old days, cut out all the young men, to their

great dissatisfaction, many of whom declared it was utterly monstrous, and a huge piece of ill-manners, to say nothing of its fitness.

"Well," said Mrs. Greenough, "if Grace isn't fixed out now. She's actually got an old man dancing with her."

"Why, Mrs. Stetson," said Mrs. Watts, who was one of the party, "it is nothing unnatural for an uncle to dance with his niece."

"Well, I'll give up, Mrs. Watts," replied Mrs. Greenough, "times are changed since we were young ladies, and danced as well as any of them. Luckily, we don't dance now, or we might cut out quite a number."

On looking again for Grace, they found she had changed partners. Good old Uncle Derby, could not dance long. Old father Time does not allow his children to play much in their old age, or second childhood. On retreating from the ranks of Terpsichore, Uncle Derby resigned Grace to the kind attention of a young chum of his.

Among the young men, there was considerable secret feeling and heart-burning, as they noticed, from time to time, who the young heiress had for a partner.

On the other hand, many estimable young ladies were forced to stand merely as spectators, they not being able to join the shining ranks. As they stood watching the many forms which seemed in ceaseless motion, they appeared like so many statues of solitude and resignation, regretting in secret that they could not secure the attentions of certain young men whose hearts they aspired to,

and no little jealousy sprung up in their bosoms on seeing their dearly beloved intended ones, the temporary, and perhaps permanent partners of others as fair as they, and excelling them by this one attainment, to possess which, they would, perhaps, have given all their diamonds and other valuable jewelry.

As much jealousy was probably experienced by the sterner sex, especially by those who owned those dear pieces of household furniture called wives, and who had the gratification of seeing them whirled around like tops in the arms of innocent and worthy young men, over whose conduct dutiful husbands were expected to keep a strict watch to discern any wayward inducement, or conduct looking towards an elopement, which in these modern days is an easy kind of divorce, to obtain which, love waits not for the slow delays of law. If not for divorcements, elopements, and the like sensations, society would languish and weary like the dying Arab in the lonely desert.

"I say, Nick," said Harry to his friend, "I have to stop dancing and locomotion, and reconnoitre. If you believe me, I haven't been introduced to a single girl except Grace Lee this evening."

"What of that, Harry? such a good-looking fellow as you should introduce himself. You can pick out your girl if you've a mind to. There's a host of them here, and most of them are passable, with a wealthy father in the background."

"But none of them, Nick, are equal to Grace Lee, I assure you, either in personal, mental, or money value.

Why, just think, she is the sole heiress of an odd million or two."

"By Jove, Harry, she's a goodly prize. I would much like to take out a letter of marque for her, in the shape of a marriage certificate. I wonder who she is dancing with just now. Do you see her?"

"I don't just now, Nick. This room is so extra large, I shall want a telescope to discern the evening star."

"Perhaps, Harry, she has turned aside to listen to some tale of love."

"Ah, here she comes, Nick, dancing with the homeliest fellow in the room. I should think, that with such a pretty girl as Grace, he would improve his looks some. I wonder who in the world he is. It will take more of an angel than he is to catch a golden fish. See how lovingly he fixes his eyes on her, and notice how he draws out his words."

"They are engaged, Harry, I suppose you know."

"Engaged, Nick, what do you mean?"

"Why, Harry, they are engaged for the next dance. You don't suppose Miss Lee would throw herself away on such a low beach sort of a fellow as he is, do you? She knows more than that, I'll warrant, and she understands who and what he is better than we do."

"Ah, Nick, there is no accounting for what a pretty woman will do sometimes, when she's in the mood."

"I would advise you, Harry, then, when you marry, to marry a plain-looking girl, and then you will be less likely to complain of her not being handsome, and withal

a young fellow in these days has to look mighty sharp as to who and what he marries."

"Come, Nick, we will both dance with Grace now ;" and the two young men separated in the vortex of the dance.

"Well, Capt. Wilder, how do you enjoy yourself?" inquired his friend, Mr. Carlisle, as the two, rather wearied out, retired to rest for a few moments on a comfortable lounge near by.

"Oh, first rate, Mr. Carlisle," replied Capt. Wilder, "I am glad to find myself in such a sunny port, and in such good company. I declare, Mr. Carlisle, if this isn't as pretty a picture of life as I've seen for many a day. It is well worth going on shore for, I assure you."

"I reckon, Captain, you don't have such dances on the ocean."

"Not often, perhaps, Mr. Carlisle. Yet it may be, there are palace halls beneath the waves, where to music which wakes not the mortal sleeper from his ocean pillow, dance the beautiful and the lost of earth, in the long dance of death."

"I suppose you have been introduced to Grace Lee, Captain."

"Oh yes, Mr. Carlisle ; and a fine girl she is too. A look at her makes me wish I was a young man again."

Here Captain Wilder wiped away a tear from his rough, weather-beaten cheek, as he thought of his youthful days.

"Well, Mr. Carlisle," rejoined the Captain, recovering from his emotion, "Miss Lee is a beautiful craft, and the

fellow who sails with it over the rough sea of life, will be fortunate ; that is all I have to say, Mr. Carlisle ; so come along and dance with the rest. Let them see how well you can keep time with them, and bob to the music. I would not be minus of the attainment just now for considerable ; and you may thank your stars you know how to."

Amid the gay circle of the dancers they separated, where the pompous form of the sea captain might now and then be seen, bobbing up and down, and rolling from side to side like a huge porpoise amid the waves.

Thus lightly the hours flew by on the shining wings of pleasure, for remorseless time stayed not in his course for youth or beauty, but swept by in glory, bearing away bright relics of thought and feeling from the brilliant field of the ever-to-be-remembered evening, whose melody echoed o'er the sea of life, like the sweet sound of distant music. Deeply was the cup of life quaffed, which was filled to overflowing with the tide of joy, and not until far into morning did the guests disperse, leaving Lee Hall once more to its silence and grandeur.

Some of my readers, who are fond of dancing, and familiar with the many emotions which the exercise calls forth, which spring, in no small measure, from its freedom of manner and action, the meeting of face with face, and the electric touches of hand with hand, can, perhaps, recount the rapturous feelings which flow in like the happy tide of many waters from the immortal sea on the human heart, sweeping over all its sorrows and burdens, and bearing it upward on blessed currents from its low sandy beaches of care and trouble.



The festival over, and the guests departed, the Lees retired with the full reward in their hearts of those who have been truly hospitable and entertaining, the rich tide of joy which had gladdened other hearts, flowing back on their own with increased delight.

Though the Lee family was immensely rich, and standing at the head of society, yet there were none of those fatal errors which so often accompany rank and affluence, and which, in a moment of time, have plunged whole families down from their high places into abysses of trouble and infamy, from which even the hand of wealth was powerless to extricate them.

Doubtless many, on the departure of their guests, would have shown by their manner, indications of delight and satisfaction at their going, a habit too often indulged in, in our part of this enlightened republic; as if friendship was a troublesome visitor, calling too often, and taking up too much of our valuable time, which else might be wasted; or, in other words, as if our friends were heavy taxes and burdens to be got rid of as quickly and easily as possible. In this way, many persons have turned their best friends out of doors. I need hardly say, that none of this feeling dwelt in the hearts or spoke in the actions of the Lees, whom I shall endeavor to depict as a model family. They indeed truly thought and felt, that only those who sincerely deny themselves for those they love and respect, in the few opportunities they have of doing it, can enjoy their friends, and realize the truth of the divine precept, "It is better to give than to receive;" for in giving, we often gain more than we

should if we had been receiving, and this is the only interest the usurer of life allows on his golden capital, which is far above the world's cold and cheap six and ten per cents., and the security of it worth millions more than the world beside.

Therefore, be self-denying, kind, and true,  
To those who love thee, they are only few ;  
Else thou shalt lack when friends thou most shall need,  
And fail to gather where thou hast sowed no seed.

## CHAPTER VI.

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Ye festive hours, farewell! and you dim form of sleep,  
Night's truest guest, a gladsome welcome!

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OVER the sleeping city the fair-eyed twilight held its radiant watches. On spire, dome, and quiet street, the full moonlight poured its silver tide, in which the city rode at anchor like a beautiful city of the sea. Who that has strolled in the silent hours of night through the deserted streets of a populous city, but what feels an indescribable awe and grandeur stealing imperceptibly over him.

All the Lee family had retired to rest except Grace, who, left alone to her own sweet company, sat by the pleasant window of her chamber, comparing the peaceful scene with that through which she had so lately passed. With her fair head resting on her hand, and her arm reposing on the window-sill, she was absorbed in musing and meditation, while to her soul the quiet of the twilight hours came and rested as the peace of heaven, and the gently sighing breezes whispered the angel breath of eternal summer. Sweet time for thought and reflection, in the calm twilight hours, when the earth like a troubled and discontented child, rests in its cradle, and life and death embrace each other in the arms of sleep!

As she sat there at her window, gazing out at the happy stars that twinkled with joy, what was the beautiful maiden thinking of? Many would have been filled with feelings of triumph, not unmixed with the flashes of pride, and the deceitful glare of coquetry. Grace well knew the train and rank of wealth that bowed at the shrine of her worth and beauty, and she regretted that so many hung around her altar. Situated as she was, sought after, and admired by all, she would gladly have eluded the ordeal. In her thoughts she recounted the many forms, and the varied sets of features which, in the past few happy hours, had glided like magic before her vision, and of which some had already faded from her mind's eye, to be seen no more, while others, written temporarily on the memorandum of memory, were destined soon to be treasured only by oblivion. In the dear place of the heart, where but two human souls can enter, was hung up the manly picture of one whom Grace Lee had not yet learned to call by name. He was no imaginary hero, such as young ladies love to dream of, but, in fact, he was a living and breathing one. Grace had sought him that evening, thinking, possibly, he might be present, but in this hope she was disappointed, and she had no other resource but to trust in the future.

"Well, Grace, how did you get over your birthday night?" inquired her father, the next morning, at breakfast table.

"Oh, pretty well," replied Grace, "I look though as if I had sat up late last night."

"Some, Grace, will not get over it as well as that I'm afraid."

"If you hear of any serious cases, father, send the family physician to them without delay."

"But there are some diseases, Grace, that cannot be cured by physic. I shall probably hear of some cases where I shall have to call you in for consultation."

"Oh, that will suit me very well, father, a little practice might make me a Florence Nightingale."

"I'm afraid not, Grace. One may cure the body, but the heart is a far different patient. I expect to have many applications this morning from interested parties, requiring private interviews on very important business, and what in the world I shall say to them, Grace, I hardly know."

"I declare, father, you will have to open a love office down town. If you find such customers too numerous and troublesome, refer them to me. I shan't charge you commission."

"Oh, certainly, Grace, for I might say no to some or all of them."

"I do not care, father, how many you say no to, if you do not negative the right one."

"Oh, by the way, Grace! how is that particular young man of yours you spoke about? Has he made his appearance as yet? Did he present himself last night?"

"I did not see him, father."

"You did not invite him then, Grace?"

"Not at all, father, I could not invite him, not knowing him."

"Well, Grace, you should have invited him. You could not expect to have him come without an invitation, especially if he is such a handsome young man as you tell of. You must look out how you slight such charming young men. Like as not he has been in a perfect agony to get an invite all this time, and you did not know it."

"If I only knew his name or residence, father, I could easily favor him. There, you see, is the difficulty."

"Well, dear, if you meet with trouble on that score, we must try and help you over it, and get you near enough to shake hands together at any rate. I shall have no objection to him, Grace, if he is only worthy. How long have you had your eye on him?"

"Well, about a year, father. I have seen him but few times in that period. It may be he does not live in this city; I have an impression he does not."

"Never mind, Grace, we can perhaps get hold of his acquaintance. But let me see; what time is it? Half past nine. I agreed to meet a man at nine. What has made me so late this morning?"

"You forget the large and brilliant party you entertained last evening, and the early hours you kept," quietly remarked Mrs. Lee, by way of reminder.

"Law me! you are right, dearest," replied Mr. Lee, "I was so taken up with Grace's nice, handsome young man, that I thought of no one else. I believe he charms me as much as he does Grace. You have not said, Grace, whether he is single or married. I suppose, though, you take it for granted that he is single."

"Certainly, father! a young lady considers every nice

young man as single, when she knows nothing to the contrary. Besides, I have never seen him with his wife."

"Well, Grace, the most wonderful part of the story is, that you do not know him, or any thing about him, and still you are deeply interested in him. If that doesn't beat all the novels I ever read or heard of!"

"You sure you are not joking, Grace?"

"Oh no, father, not at all. It is a serious subject I assure you," said Grace, as her father, after looking steadily at her for a few seconds, with hat and cane in hand, as if doubting whether she was really in earnest, turned, and passed down the door-steps, and pursued his way to his counting-room with a hurried step, as business of importance awaited him. Though he had immense interests at stake, and had passed peerless and lonely through many daring straits of fortune, and by many frowning Gibaltars of commerce, coming out victorious through many wrecks, yet he was one who trod along all the more bravely over life's pathway, under his load of responsibilities, which he carried easily and naturally as if a pleasure to him. He cared not for wealth for its own sake; on the other hand, he despised the mere money-getters of the world, who heaped up riches against their own enjoyment. Knowing the true use of riches, the needy and worthy applicant was never turned empty away, and many were his acts of charity, which placed him among the truly benevolent. Unlike those who build a golden mammon in the wilderness of this world, and then fall down and worship it because they have nothing better, he believed in doing good while he lived,

and he was eminently right, for after all, if one possessed the riches of the universe, he could only enjoy a small portion of them for a very short season. Take the richest men, and how little do they enjoy of all their wealth, the mere possession of which cannot purchase the ticket to the quiet seats of true pleasure and content, for heaven in this, or the other world, is not purchased by the rich man's money. How often, alas, are men ungrateful to the great Giver, for what they consider is the result of their own exertions, forgetful of the kind permission and coöperation of Providence ! Not so with Mr. Lee, however. Not a day passed over his head, but what he thanked his heavenly father for the blessings which were showered upon him. Herein lies the secret of many a man's wealth and goodness, and success in life.

Take note, therefore, and remember it. Thankfulness to God for his goodness is the golden key to his infinite storehouse. One feeling of gratitude to God, has made many men rich more than all their dollars.

As Mr. Lee passed hurriedly onward to his counting-room, he thought not of his ships, or stocks, but his mind dwelt with parental interest on his daughter's future welfare, about which he was not without some solicitude.

On arriving at his counting-room, and disposing of the important business which had been the cause of his haste, he sat down and glanced at the paper, which, to his surprise, contained three whole columns devoted to the last evening's ball, and furnished by correspondents who, of course, were not present on the interesting occasion.

Mr. Lee, who could not pass over the piece, read it



with a particular interest, finding himself and family extensively advertised; while the beauty and *élite* of modern Athens, awakened late in the morning, found themselves famous, and set off in such beautiful style of language and dress, that for awhile the correspondent of the "Times" was thoroughly eclipsed. I mean by this, of course, the "London Times."

In short, the fashion and magnificence of the scene was descanted on to the minutest particular; also, certain dresses, with the names of their wearers, were duly announced for the benefit of discerning Christendom.

The pearls, diamonds, and precious stones, which set these off to advantage, were also given, together with their value. Whether any of these wearers of earthly jewels had the pearl of great price, is not stated in the letters and despatches of our late esteemed and worthy correspondent.

The eatables and drinkables, including the thimble full of wine, were also discussed with a keen literary relish, which smacked somewhat of the physical, and praise grew extravagant in honor of the gold and silver ware which glittered on the festive table, and lit the superb repast. In fact, the brilliant affair, which was henceforth to live ever bright in the memory of fashion and the mind of a fashionable generation, was described with so much splendor and felicity of expression, as to make many doubt whether it was a glowing fiction, or a beautiful reality.

Mr. Lee, after taking a look at the stocks, auctions, and ship news, and other items, delightful and agreeable to a

man of business, gave way to an involuntary smile, which stole over his features as he thought of the description of the Lee levee, and, throwing down the newspaper, turned to his letters which had just arrived from the grand new Post-Office, and was soon immersed in the tide of the world. Here and there, among the pile of letters, were some neatly enfolded in white and gilded envelopes, marked "Private," in the corners, which he laid aside for future reference, well knowing what they must contain, but somewhat surprised that his prediction to Grace should so soon prove true.

"Why, girls, where have you been to?" inquired Mrs. Lee, on Grace and Lizzie's return from their morning ride in the family barouche.

"Oh, not over a dozen miles, mother," replied Grace.

"Did you see any of our last night's friends, Grace?"

"Not many, mother; we did not look particularly for them, and probably many of them have not got up yet. There were two young men, however, who took off their hats to us, much to our relief. They probably belonged to highly respectable families, and were at our party last evening, since which event I shall have to put up with a great deal of politeness; and Lizzie, mother, has consented to bear part of it, and go halves with me on it."

"She is truly kind, Grace, I should think."

"Well, I do not care, mother, for such politeness, for supposing we were poor, or should be suddenly reduced as some have been; why, there is not one in fifty of them would notice me, or even look at me."

"I know it, Grace. It is too true. That is the policy

of the world. I well remember how I was situated when about the same age. Your father was comparatively a poor man then, but he was fast rising, and reckoned one of the very smartest young men in the city. In the face of many good offers, as the world reckons them, I married him, and have never regretted my choice, and I hope Grace you will be as happy ; but you cannot be too careful in the choice you may make."

"I should rather be single all my lifetime, mother, than make a miserable choice."

"Have you seen that interesting young man, Grace?"

"No, mother, I really wish I was acquainted with him."

"Well, probably you will be some time, Grace."

"I don't know about that, mother, as I have not seen him now for some time. He's a prince of a young man, if I can judge any thing from appearances."

"Yes, Grace, you can judge sometimes very correctly by the eye. The countenance, in a great measure, is the index dial of the heart. I trust, Grace, you will not be deceived in this respect. Remember that but few of the sons of beauty possess true goodness of mind and heart."

"I don't think there is much danger of that, mother, for I am not so romantic as some. There is in my own mind as much doubt about him as reality."

"And then if he is married, Grace?"

"I don't think he is, mother, I can tell pretty near whether a young man is married or not."

"Why, Grace. You are certainly ahead of my time when I was of your age."

"Of course, mother! Why shouldn't I be? The present generation of young ladies is certainly ahead of the last one. That you must admit, if you concede the progress humanity makes. If the young man is married, however, I shall certainly wish him all happiness. I have not yet fallen in love with him, I assure you. I kind of feel an interest in him, that is all. On making his acquaintance I might dislike him very much."

"What do you think of Mr. Farnum, Grace? Don't you think him a nice young man?"

"I cannot say to the contrary, mother. Many young ladies would be glad to have him, no doubt, but I am not of the number. There are also many others apparently as nice as he. I can recall at this moment many who have squandered their dearest treasures on such so-called nice young men, from under whose polished exterior and winning address have burst forth too late the hideous forms of what in reality they were."

Grace, in this last remark, was strictly correct, for alas, every year, how many unfortunates such as these there are, who, like the doomed prisoners of Venice, pass over the Bridge of Sighs to return no more to the beautiful city! The happy bird of paradise lights only where there are two loving hearts.

"If not for the one young man, mother," continued Grace, "I might flee the many, but for the sake of the one I will endure the many, and be like the good shepherd, who seeks for the one dear lamb of the flock. In regard to all, what better rule can I adopt than the golden one?"

"No better rule, Grace, certainly. Only think what a delightful world this would be if the golden rule was universally put in practice. It would bask in perpetual sunshine. This puts me in mind, Grace, of a beautiful story connected with the golden rule, which is in a lately published novel."

"Who is the author, mother?"

"I do not know, Grace. It is a very remarkable novel. Have you not heard of it?"

"Oh yes, mother, I remember now. It came out a little while ago; and there is such a beautiful name to it too. Is this it, mother?"

"Yes, Grace. I had just passed the story about the golden rule when you came home."

Here Grace, taking the book, sat down and read the story aloud to Lizzie, as follows:

#### THE GOLDEN CITY.

"There was once a lovely and thriving metropolis, the inhabitants of which possessed a golden rule, which acted like a magic charm on all which they said and did. In this respect the city was most noted and remarkable.

"It could be distinguished far out at sea by the hardy mariner, as its walls and turrets gleamed like palaces of paradise across the waves, and lit the storm-bound vessel on its lonely way to far-off climes, while the clear mellow chime of its distant bells fell on the ear of the sailor boy at the midnight watch, sweeter than the voice of his vine-clad home by the river side.

“No vessel ever cast anchor in its shining ports, save those who carried the golden rule. Its golden fleet sailed far over the sea, bringing back from ever happy climes, the sweet fruits and vintage of gardens ever bright and fair. Many a proud ship of commerce, with its snow-white sails, has tried to enter its sunny harbor, but all in vain ; as, after standing into port for many days with straining eyes, the captain and crew, at last, were compelled to tack around, and bid the Golden City a long, long farewell, while around them, as they departed, lingered and murmured in dying cadence the sweet music of the city they might never reach.

“Often on the stormy billows they hailed the boatmen and sailors who manned its golden ships, but they received in reply to their cry, ‘Ship Ahoy,’ only the answer of ‘All is well, all is well,’ which was repeated and echoed back by the city, which recognized its watchword and motto in the grand chorus which came pealing and swelling over the waves from countless voices, —

“‘All is well, all is well,  
In the city where we dwell ;  
All is well, all is well !’

“To the eyes of many a sea-captain the tears have come, and watered the smooth deck of the merchantman, at the thought that he should never reach the Golden City, or drop his anchor in its shining port, where no vessel ever anchored save those with golden sails, and whose compass was the golden rule.

“These ships of the Golden City were most noble and beautiful to behold. With their glittering masts, and

brilliant streamers, and elegant carriage, they broke on the view of the astonished mariner, like the vessels from some unknown, far-off region, and lovelier far than the ships of Tarshish in the days of Solomon. On board, the mystic crews could be distinctly seen, as now and then they furled and unfurled the golden sails, or started off in their long boats, making music with their dripping oars, and singing most sweetly, —

“ ‘All is well, all is well,  
In the city where we dwell;  
All is well, all is well!’

“Softly and slowly the chorus of the golden boatmen faded in the distance, as they disappeared from sight in the streets of the Golden City.

“But little was known of the Golden City save what was acquired by sight and sound; and none ever penetrated the mysteries of its inhabitants and their mode of living. On the vision the city loomed in all its splendor, and often overpowered the beholder, by its grandeur and magnificence, as spires, domes, steeples, towers, and walls arose in all their golden beauty to the heavens above. Often the ear of the listener was entranced by the songs and anthems of its sweet-voiced choirs, accompanied by the solemn and stately music of its holy organs, pealing over the ocean, like strains from the far-off islands of the blest, as the inhabitants of the Golden City kept their peaceful Sabbath, while stranger or curious loiterer never entered its charming and hallowed precincts.

“That the inhabitants of the Golden City were a busy and enterprising people, was inferred from the hum of ma-

chinery, and the sound of the anvil and forge within, while without, on the sea-side, their noble wharves were thickly stored with the cargoes, both for export and import, that loaded their goodly vessels, and added to their enormous wealth and revenue.

“ Along the winding streets and stretching avenues glided the chariots and horsemen, together with teams and wagons of conveyance, on all of which was engraved the golden rule.

“ Far away, in the gleaming background, rose a thousand emerald hills, on which were cattle, together with shepherds clad in shining robes, with golden crooks in their hands, who kept and tended the gold-fleeced flocks of the Golden City, while on the sunny meadows and smiling plains waved the golden harvest, with its yellow blades, the year around.

“ Pleasant fields there were over which the herds of the Golden City roamed, and cropped the precious herbage, and where also wandered the elk and gazelle, in loving and graceful beauty.

“ At times the mellow horn of the golden huntsmen, and the distant baying of their hounds could be faintly heard, mingling with the sweet songs of the golden reapers, as they sharpened their glittering scythes, and gathered in their golden harvests, singing with clear glad-some voices, —

“ ‘ Harvest home, all is well,  
In the city where we dwell ;  
All is well, all is well ! ’ ”



"At morning and evening, from its many shining temples ascended songs of praise and thanksgiving, while the watchmen on the walls lifted up their voices and joined in the swelling chorus, which stole on the astonished listener like the melody from another world.

"But like the beautiful Palmyra of the desert, the Golden City lives henceforth in tradition and romance as the lovely ideal city, within whose golden gates the step of mortal may never enter. Not until the Golden Rule is universally practised by mankind, will they experience the blessedness which the obeying of it to the letter confers."

"Oh how beautiful this is, mother," remarked Grace. "It is really enchanting. It makes me wish I was an inhabitant of the Golden City myself. I would really like to know the author of it."

"It is an immensely popular book, Grace. For originality, and gems of thought and language, it is unequalled. It is so different from all the books which have been published of late, that all literarydom is trying to find out who wrote it. They have already found five or six different authors of it, and how many more they will find I cannot say."

"On your recommendation, mother, I will read it through, then, commencing at the beginning;" and, true to her word, Grace was soon deeply immersed in the flowing rivers of its genius and beauty, until the door bell and the dinner bell ringing together, startled her, giving intimations of an unusual connection of causes and effects.

“ On Grace’s looking out of the bay window, her father, and a young man with a small valise in his hand, stood on the doorsteps, the young man being heard of Cousin Henry, just arrived from college. Like many young men who hail from so fashionable a resort in life, Cousin Henry was rather of an aristocratic cut, and when introduced to his charming Cousin Grace, whom he had not seen since early boyhood, he inwardly cursed the fate that had prevented him from attending the ball, the glowing particulars of which he had read in the morning papers, with the kind of feeling in his heart that a drowning man has catching at a straw.

“ Cousin Henry was indeed a charming young man, as many of his young lady friends were in the habit of thinking. Having graduated at a respectable distance from either end of his class (not liking extremes), and having an average proportion of the honors of his college whist, he had set out from home to see his matchless city cousin, whose beauty he had only dreamed of. On his arrival he had expected to find a sophisticated and rather coquettish city belle. His expectations were probably the wishes of many, that our city young ladies would get up some better style of appearance, so as to be more fashionable.

Cousin Henry had had several sweet flutters of the heart before, including one in particular, but hearing of Cousin Grace’s remarkable beauty, and informed of the large dowry she was heir to, what to him was the sweet flower of hill and valley, compared with the beautiful rose of the city garden?

“ I am sorry, Cousin Henry, you did not arrive in time

for our last evening's party, remarked Grace, after the preliminary introductions were over."

"I confess, I feel very sorry myself, Miss Lee, but least said is soonest mended, and one day late is a long time after the fair," remarked Cousin Henry, as he stroked a moderate beard and moustache, which he had for some time earnestly cultivated, but which,—in the language of a down-town barber, who was a good judge of natural crops,—was hardly worth the raising.

Here, leaving Cousin Henry to enlighten himself and Mrs. Lee on various subjects, Mr. Lee and his daughter retired after dinner to the library-room, as he had important information to communicate, which in secret he actually wished was at the bottom of the sea, or some other remote place.

What most occupied Cousin Henry's mind in the interim, was, whether or no he was the subject of anything so interesting as a private interview, in which some design on his hand and heart might be meditated behind the scenes, as secure from intrusion, Grace and her father seated themselves; the former wondering what her father had to communicate, as he pulled from his pocket a goodly package of letters done up in white envelopes, which he handed to his daughter with a feeling of relief, as if he had cleared his mind by emptying his pocket, the letters being the same as those he had received that very morning, and laid away for future reference. Not knowing exactly how to proceed in so novel a dilemma, he resolved to advise with Grace before answering them. Opening the letters, Mr. Lee

read to the edification and amusement of Grace as follows.

“WILLIAM LEE, Esq:

“Dear Sir, — Being highly charmed with the beauty and accomplishments of your daughter, Grace, I would hereby most respectfully ask your consent to pay my very valuable addresses to her. A favorable answer addressed to the undersigned, at No. 50 State Street, Insurance office, No. 2, and Bank No. 6, will meet with prompt attention. All communications extremely confidential.

“Most truly yours, &c.

“J. FRANCIS.”

“Beautiful, father, go on,” remarked Grace, laughing.

“Well, Grace, here is letter number two, with a device of two hearts shot through by an arrow.”

“MR. WILLIAM LEE:

“Dear Sir, — Having been introduced to your daughter last evening, and entertaining the warmest feelings and the most hearty respect for her, I would most respectfully ask your consent to wait upon your daughter, with a view to matrimony. Hoping for a favorable answer at an early day, I remain,

“Yours, &c. &c.

“J. T. AUSTIN.”

“They really improve, father.”

“Well, here is letter number three, Grace, with a big

royal private seal of costly sealing-wax attached, and written on lace-pointed, warm-hearted, pink-colored paper, such as would-be lovers generally indulge in when they wish to say sweet lovely things to each other."

"WILLIAM LEE :

"Dear Sir, — I trust sincerely that you will be pleased, by granting your kind permission to my slight request, that I may correspond with your daughter, Miss Grace, or pay my addresses to her in person, as with her I think I should be made happy for life and hereafter. I am one of the finest and most agreeable young men in New England, and am anxious you should forward my hopes and wishes in the above request. For reference, as to my character and standing, I beg leave to refer you to Messrs. McPhail & Co., bankers and brokers, of which I am the private and silent partner. Please send me an answer by return mail. If I do not hear from you in an hour favorably, I shall leave in the next steamer for Europe.

"Yours, &c., in haste,

"WALTER LANDOR." \*

"What do you think of this, Grace?" asked her father, as he concluded the reading of it. "Don't you think here's a chance for you?"

"I guess, father, I will wait till he gets back from Europe."

\* For a true copy of the foregoing letter, we are very much indebted to Messrs. Bowdell & Ingersoll, of the "Common Gazette," to whom we return our grateful acknowledgments.

"Here is another letter, Grace, which reads pretty fair. I declare, the young men are after you, and at short notice too. Listen to letter number four, Grace, and see if it strikes your fancy."

"MR. LEE :

"Dear Sir, — I trust you will excuse me, if I confide to you the important secret. that I have deeply at heart the future interest and welfare of your daughter, whose beauty and accomplishments are so charming and irresistible; and I most earnestly ask your consent to form an acquaintance with her with a view to marriage. Without her, I feel that life would be a burden, and I would seek to win her with my whole heart's devotion. Though perhaps unknown to you, I am one of the most promising and talented young men in the country, and would seek to make myself generally useful, by an alliance with some wealthy and influential family, like your own, needing a worthy son-in-law. Good reference required.

"Yours, most truly,

"H. COOLIDGE."

That young man, father, is truly in need of a good situation. It is a pity he should be wasting his valuable time writing love-letters."

"After reading the rest of the letters, which were of a similar tone, Grace sat pondering, as if in an amusing meditation.

"Well, Grace, what shall I do with these letters?" her father at length inquired.

"I think, father, that there's none of them but what

do to kindle the fire with. I thought I might have some such letters, but I did not expect so many and so soon."

"Well, there they are, Grace; you may do what you please with them. Perhaps you had better confer with your mother on the subject before deciding what to do. As for Cousin Henry, you must beau him round, and entertain him while he stays. Perhaps you had better take a ride with him around town this afternoon."

Accordingly, in the afternoon, the family barouche was got ready for a drive, and Grace and her mother, together with Cousin Henry, rode through the most prominent streets of Boston. The family team of the Lees, whenever it appeared in public, attracted universal attention, by its beautiful appearance and the stately physique of its fine horses, and Cousin Henry, with Grace by his side, felt remarkably happy at finding himself in such pleasant circumstances.

Street after street was gone through with in succession, the several scenes and buildings of interest being pointed out to Henry as they passed them.

The autumn sunset, as they rode homeward, lit up the western sky with a golden glory, and, as they passed slowly around the Common, the scene was indeed beautiful.

To those who love to look on the pictures of nature, nothing of its kind can be more lovely or inviting than the scene which Boston Common and its surroundings present at the calm hour of nightfall, and especially when the clear, still autumn evening steals in on the loved New England city, placing starry sentinels like angel watchers

over its hallowed walls, while in the distance steeple and dome peer into the broad blue sky, and look down from serene heights on the noble scene. Ah! happy are they who, in maturer years, can look back with pleasure on the sunny days when they nestled in the Common's grassy bosom, and played beneath the shadows of its lordly elms!



## CHAPTER VII.

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Many may love me, but my heart  
Tells me, I can love but one.

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“**H**OW are the letters, Grace?” inquired her father, as he arrived home, and settled himself down in his easy-chair.

“They are safe yet, replied Grace.”

“Have you looked them over with your mother, Grace?”

“No, not yet, father; I have not glanced at them. Mother has not seen what treasures I have got, either. I cannot make up my mind what to do with them. If it was practicable, I should prefer letting them remain unanswered.”

“I suppose, Grace, all those young men who wrote them, are in an agony for an answer,” remarked Mr. Lee.

“I should think they were likely to be, father,” replied Grace. “They place me in very awkward and extraordinary circumstances.”

“Extraordinary, Grace, did you say; how so?”

“Why, extraordinary, father, you know what that means? And then only think that I should have so many letters, and of such a character too, when I have

just entered society, and had hardly time to look around me. Why, if it had not happened in my individual case, I should consider it at once both untrue and ridiculous. If any one should name a similar instance, I could not believe it for a moment, and you might search through all romances and love-stories for the like precedent."

"True, Grace," replied her father, "but the circumstance shows that you are warmly esteemed by your numerous acquaintances."

"I declare, father, I feel really persecuted by them, and if not for some considerations, I should feel strongly tempted to leave the city for some retired place."

"Or, in strong poetical language,

‘Some boundless contiguity of shade,’

Grace, I suppose you mean."

"I might take refuge in a convent; what say you to that, father?"

"What a pretty nun she would make, Liz, wouldn't she? I reckon there would be quite an acquisition of amative monks soon as she took the veil."

"No doubt, Mr. Lee," remarked Liz, "Grace would be likely to find every one of her letter-writers there, and the result might be an elopement in high life from a convent."

"Then I'd go off to some lonely island, Liz."

"Yes, Grace, and have some romantic Robinson Crusoe after you there."

At this juncture Mr. Lee, laughing heartily at the rather comical turn affairs had taken, suddenly upset the

fluid lamp on the table, which, seeming to partake of the excitement of the occasion, turned over directly on the letters, enveloping them instantly with its spreading flame, and it required but an instant for Mr. Lee to snatch them and hurl them into the grate near by, whose red coals, glowing and stretching forth their fiery tongues, seemed to gloat over their destruction, which was so complete and sudden as to leave not a trace behind.

The excitement being over, and the fire extinguished without doing any further material damage, the Lees were silent with astonishment at this unexpected and fortunate decision of important family matters by the household utensils.

"Good, good! I'm glad of it," cried Grace; "I'm glad they are burned up; I've been tempted to burn them myself more than once, and they deserved just such a ridiculous fate."

"Don't you want some duplicates of them, Grace?"

"Yes, do, father! Go to the publishers and get a second edition, revised and corrected, and perhaps we can dispose of them in the same expeditious manner. I am so glad. In fact, I have forgotten who wrote them. For myself, I would rather have an edition of something else not quite so voluminous, and with fewer authors.

In this respect Grace was right, for the book of love has but one leaf within it, on which a single dear name is written in shining letters. Besides, what cared Grace for the lost letters? While they existed, they placed her in an awkward position, but now that fate had disposed of them for her, she felt relieved, while it was very probable that

she would not soon be the recipient of the like favors. From her heart she thanked the good Providence which had stepped in, so suddenly and expeditiously, in her behalf. To some though, it might seem otherwise. Indeed they might have hit upon some plan to extricate themselves from so delicate a position, so that no loss of friendship, or rise of ill-feelings would have ensued. Many methods might be suggested, but often in spite of human efforts, Providence steps in without warning, removing many of the little mole-hills of vexation, and sweeping ruthlessly down into valleys of oblivion, the large mountains of trial and sorrow, which darken the pathway of daily life, and which often sink or disappear just as the traveller is preparing to climb them.

Most of us love the hill-side and the mountains, as they are in the natural world, and we endure much hardship and suffering of the body, that we may stand on the verdant slope and the lofty summit, and look forth on the stretching landscape as on some distant enchantment, the far off view of which may be seen from no other place in the wide world. To stand like Moses of old, and look out as on the promised land, over sunny vales and fertile plains, on which our steps may never tread, is a delight which we often toil long and patiently to experience, and the memory of it—the remembrance of the beautiful landscape—will seem like some serene vision of paradise seen from earth's upper palace windows.

But when we come to the mountains of life, we draw back from their frowning steeps and threatening summits,

which we would rather be excused from climbing. If Providence removes them from our path, for some reason unknown to us, thankful are we, and often selfishly so, but if we have to mount them, we are apt to go up heavenward, groaning under God's goodness, and complaining of the hardness of our lot; and we often compare ourselves with others, as if to see whether or no God is not partial to some of his children, — whether there are not some favorite ones to whom he is more indulgent. It often happens, if we see some rolling in prosperity and content, while just at that time we are anxious and troubled about many things, and are just beginning to climb with weary steps some high mountain of duty which we find before us, that we conclude they are never troubled as ourselves, and that they never climbed any such mountains, when probably, not long before, they passed over the same toilsome way, and came off victorious. How strong are the steps of many, and how fresh they feel when travelling along the royal road of life, but let some great obstacle come up before them, some apparently insurmountable difficulty, and lo, their steps are weary in an instant, and their feet fail them as they go up to glory and attainment, sighing as they go, and when they reach the promised land, they are sick pilgrims in a realm flowing with milk and honey.

The poor man thinks he could be happy in a palace, while the rich man sighs for the health and strength of the daily laborer, but the good angel of life is found neither in the home of wealth, nor the cot of poverty, but in the dwelling-house of contentment between the two.

A day or two after the destruction of Grace's letters, there duly appeared in the papers a paragraph describing the circumstances, and the narrow escape of the Lee family from fire, as follows :

" We learn that on Tuesday evening last, a fluid lamp which was burning on the table, in the sitting-room of Mr. William Lee's house, accidentally lost its equilibrium, and tipping over, set fire to some letters said to have been received lately from numerous sources, by Miss Lee, a young lady of rare attainments, and great beauty. No one fortunately was injured, but all the letters, of an exceedingly interesting character, were completely destroyed.

" P. S. Mr. William Lee requests us to say that he regrets the accident, but does not wish to receive any more letters of the kind, addressed either to himself or his daughter, as no answer to them will be given."

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Great was the astonishment of the public and the letter-writers, on reading the above announcement, and numerous were the congratulations that Grace received on her providential escape, whether from the letters or the fire, or from both combined, we are not informed. Probably not a few of the letter-writers themselves, were among the number, as they too had a very narrow escape, and whether there be any thing in names or not, there was not much in theirs, for they were written in the devouring

flames, so that Grace could not even tell who her lovers were.

Think of that, ye young ladies, who are so fortunate now-a-days as to have several lovers !

Yet it is hard sometimes for a young lady to know what to do with her lovers, especially if she has very many spare ones, and if they annoy her much with certain missiles sent from the shaft of Cupid, it might not be impolite to burn them, no matter what else they are good for ; they will, in most cases, prove excellent kindling-wood, and a dinner or supper, cooked by a fire lit by these precious materials of fuel, will taste all the sweeter for many days : but in following this recipe, young ladies, see to lighting the fire yourself, kindling it with your own hands, and not trust to the cook or kitchen girl ; also be very careful what you burn up, for love-letters are always uninsured, and are often very dear firewood, for after they are committed to the flames they return no more.

The sweetest moment to a young lady is when she receives a love-letter from the young man she loves. Her first love-letter, it may be, — how she grasps the precious treasure in delightful anticipation, and hurries away with it to some silent corner where none but her own eyes shall read its welcome contents. With what delight she peruses the handwriting, which, in itself, is a pen writing its deep characters of love upon her heart. If reply is needed, with what a tremor of bliss she takes up her pen, much in doubt whether she can make language come up to the sweet occasion.

Ah, what would one not give for such a love-letter as that! But Grace Lee had not arrived at such a happy moment, for her love-letters were all destroyed, and if the one dear treasure was there, it shared the fate of the common lot.



## CHAPTER VIII.

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The aristocracy of life,  
And genteel dissipation hand in hand.

---

**I**N a well-known club-house, overlooking the street, was gathered a circle of young men, who were enjoying quite a chit-chat among themselves, which was enlivened now and then by a glass of wine, and made musical by the clink of goblet and decanter in friendly collision.

A few empty chairs here and there, showed that the circle was yet incomplete. Soon another form enters the brilliantly-lighted apartment. Taking the half-consumed cigar from his mouth, and tossing it away as if impatient to get rid of it for something better, he hurriedly gulps down a glass of wine, and throwing himself down into an easy lounge chair, gave vent to his pent-up feelings, by a very long sigh of relief, after which he felt disposed to comment on the great topic of the day, which had created an unusual excitement in certain quarters.

“What in time is the matter with you, Bill, this evening? Have you got an answer yet to that letter of yours?”

“What letter do you refer to, Dick?”

“Why, what an ignoramus, Bill. Here take the paper and read the news for yourself.”

"Well, that is curious," replied Bill, as he finished reading the article referred to, which he had read before much to his amusement. "By the way, Dick, was your letter insured?"

"I'm afraid yours was not, Bill. I've not been to the insurance offices to find out. If you had one there, though, it's likely a total loss. As for me, just as if I would be such a fool as to send such a letter to Grace Lee. If she's won, it won't be by writing love-letters to her or her father. To get into such a scrape, boys, reminds me of the time when some of us went a hunting last fall, and got into that all-fired bog. You remember it, don't you, Charlie?"

"Yes, Dick, that *was* an all-fired bog, for we set fire to the brush all around, and liked to got burned to death, in order to get out of it."

"And the hunting suit of terra-firma we stole out of that bog too, Charlie."

"Ha, ha, Dick, them were bully clothes; kind of an outside suit to put on when you come up out of a bog. We got them on a long credit. They beat any honest tailor's suit all hollow, they looked so fashionable. But hush; here comes Joe Raymond. Let us see what he has to offer."

"Ha, ha, my boys! How runs the tide to-night? Why! you really look as if you were all engaged in a deep conspiracy to upset the-hub of the universe, or something else equally desperate and ridiculous."

"It's a desperate case, Joe. The hub of the universe is about to secede from the union. Where shall we spokes go then?"

"Why, really, Tim, you don't say! I declare, it beats the secession of little saucy South Carolina all to pieces.

"Well, Tom, what is the news this evening, any way?"

"Not much, Joe. It seems a fort was attacked by certain missiles of war, but, after arriving in the fort, a providential fire did away with them all together."

"What fort is that, Tom?"

"Oh, don't be alarmed, Joe, for its neither Fort Sumter or Pickens. I won't venture to say, though, as to who has found a mitten in the fire, but certain parties are suspected of furnishing kindling material. How is it, Jim, do you find any thing among the cinders?"

"By the way, Joe, have you seen our charming city belle lately? Who is that fellow, I wonder, who was riding out with her the next day? Does any one know him hereabouts?"

"It's her intended, I suppose, Tom."

"Pshaw! her intended! I'll wait till the intended grows real, before I'll believe it, Jim."

"Any how, Tom, I suppose you have heard she was engaged. I'll leave it to Charlie and Bill if they did not hear the same thing a month ago."

"Pooh! Nonsense, Jim. Don't you believe it, boys, any of you; for, if you do, you will get love-cracked all of a sudden, and your hearts will shake in your bosoms like so much broken crockery. But here comes Ben Randall. Tell him the flying story without any wings, of Miss Lee being engaged, and see if he don't start."

"Well, boys, good evening to you! What's going

on? Any mischief on foot?" remarked Ben, as he entered the happy circle.

"Oh, nothing, Ben," replied Dick. "Only an engagement in high life."

"What kind of a one, pray, Dick. I wonder if it's any thing like mine; for I've got an engagement at eight o'clock. If you've nothing more interesting to tell a fellow, I'm off for better society. If anybody's got any love-letters to send by penny-post, I will take them free of expense, but I would advise you to insure them, else they might burn up before I got there."

"Ha, ha, Ben, capital idea that, of getting love-letters insured. I wonder who would take the risk, and at what sum they would value them."

"Let's you and I, Dick, get up an insurance company on that principle. 'Twould not do though to take any risk on Miss Lee's love-letters. If we did, they would fail us at once."

"I'll tell you, Ben, you might take such a risk, and have Miss Lee for security."

"Come, boys! who's going up the street with me? We can call on Grace, and console her on the loss of her love-letters. Poor girl, she must weep over their early fate!"

"Tush, Ben, you are getting quite sentimental."

"Quite so, Dick, I assure you. It really seems as if I could weep a hogshead of tears. I've no doubt, if we'd only been up there at the time of the accident, we should have made a good fire-engine company."

"In that case, Ben, your hogshead of tears would have made a first-rate hydrant."

"Yes, Dick, and we should have tasted of the bottle linings of her father's cellar by way of refreshment."

"O get out, Tom! You are thinking only of the dregs. I am quite willing to look for what's above the cellar."

"Yes, and so far above, Dick, you will be tall if you reach it. However, I'd give a good deal of her father's money to have the girl all to myself for a few short years, wouldn't you, Bill?"

"You'd better look out, Tom. The public around here will think you wrote one of them letters, sure. But Ben's gone, and it's most time for some one to follow him."

Soon the young men, one after the other, left the club-room, and the scene was changed.

Young man! Do you remember the first call on your sweetheart some charming evening? How beautiful was the calm moonlight to you, as the silver orb, bending down from its high and holy station, seemed to whisper love's blessed benediction in your ear. How winningly the gentle breeze fanned your life's throbbing pulses, as if nature herself was jealous of your all-absorbing passion. What varied emotions of hope and joy filled your heart, as it went beating along with you to the door of her house. With what a vague, indefinite sense of delight did you ascend the door-steps, and, half resolutely, pull the bell, while you waited with your very breath listening for the sound of the welcome footsteps within.

Ah! those were happy hours which you spent on that delightful evening. Many happy hours you may experience hereafter, but happier hours than those you will never know. Sweet through all the coming years will be the memory and the thought of them, though, alas, they have passed away forever.

On Ben's leaving the club-room, he took, strange to say, the direct road to Mr. Lee's house, and, on the whole, being quite an acceptable young man, he felt pleased to drop into such good society of an evening as that of charming Grace Lee. As he was somewhat timid, he faltered considerably ere he gave the pull on the door-bell, as if his own heart was the handle on one end, and Grace's heart the bell on the other. Having sent up his card, he waited for an answer, and was soon ushered into the drawing room, where he was received by Grace with her accustomed hospitality, and formally introduced to the jealous Cousin Henry, who rather quietly and stintingly returned the salutation, and resumed the paper he had been reading, while he chuckled with inward delight over the paragraph in regard to the burnt letters, which were disposed of entirely to his satisfaction, and he doubted much whether he could have done any better with them himself, while he regarded Grace's guest as the unlucky author of one of them at least. Scarcely twenty minutes had elapsed before the door-bell rang again, and another card was received by Grace, just as she had reached the middle of a charming song she was singing for the edification of the aforesaid Ben and Cousin Henry.

Lover number two, — another of the unlucky letter-writers, thought Cousin Henry to himself.

As Grace sent back immediate word that she was engaged, Dick was forced to retire somewhat disconcerted as to the result, and much troubled in his mind as to the real meaning of the word engaged, as used by Grace. Walking down the street, however, a thought struck him, and he darted into an empty doorway and watched for coming circumstances. He had not waited very long in his hiding-place, before he recognized his friend Charlie coming along to try the same experiment, — to pull the same unsatisfactory door-bell, and receive through the sense of hearing only its jingle for satisfaction.

“Good enough for you! Try again some other evening!” sounded a voice with a low chuckle attached to it, as Charlie backed down the door-steps, bowing very politely to the servant girl, as he joined his feet with the footsteps of his predecessors.

Quietly the several young men waited for the last comer, who happened to be Bill, who, on arriving at the door, and noticing several heads peering out here and there, as if lying in wait for him, hesitated, and, taking out his watch, concluded not to ring until he had completed a tour of observation in the immediate vicinity. In this he had not proceeded far, before he stumbled on his several friends.

“So you have been playing the spy by the wholesale! Pretty business for such nice young men to be engaged in,” remarked Bill on discovering them. “There must

be something very important to call you here at this hour of the night."

"Hush, Bill, replied Dick. We are waiting to see who comes out from Miss Lee's. Maybe you will see Miss Grace's handkerchief waving like a flag of truce out of her window, with her white lily hand attached to it, and all such pretty sights you know."

"Pshaw, Dick, you astonish me. But where in the world is Ben? We shall have to advertise him through the crier."

"Yes, Bill, all of us would like to know where Ben is. Faith, I do believe he has cut us out. He was first to leave the club room," remarked Charlie.

"Well, we will wait, Charlie. Perhaps Ben will turn up yet, if he does not sit up all night."

"Did you ring the door-bell, Bill, when you went up the steps?" inquired Dick.

"No, Dick. I saw so many heads bobbing in and out in the gas-light, I thought whether or no there might not be some charm about it. I suppose you were fools enough to do it. What answer did you get?"

"Why, Bill, we got no for an answer, with a polite request to call again."

"A very natural answer, Dick. It's not every young lady who can give such an answer as that. Well, I declare, Tom, is that you turned up from the next doorway. I didn't know you lived down this way before."

"Well, I've got the wrong door, Charlie, that is all. I got the right door though, once this evening, but it was no go."



Here the young men retired together to the first lamp post to compare notes by gas-light, their evening's entertainment being quite unsatisfactory, as far as Grace was concerned, but otherwise, quite amusing, on account of the jokes they had unconsciously played on each other.

"It would be funny if Ben was up to Grace's all this time," queried Joe.

"What, up there all the evening, and so late? Why, it's half past nine now," remarked Bill.

"Pooh, Bill! that is not so very late in the city. It's quite a genteel hour to sit up with a young lady. It keeps her from dreaming unpleasant dreams," replied Dick.

"Tush, Dick, the young ladies hereabouts dream in the daytime with their eyes open, and their wide awake dreams are the best and most reliable," remarked Charlie.

"Pretty dears these young ladies are, aren't they, Tom?"

"Did you leave your card, Bill?"

"That's a blessed thought, Joe,—what put that into your head? Judging from your own success, I would rather be excused, and treated to a hot supper for declining the honor. Own up Joe, now."

"No, Bill, not unless you include the whole of us."

"Agreed, boys, if you want to treat me I've no objection; but see to it you honestly foot the bills, for I've got no money with me. I tell you that beforehand, so you may take pity on me, and treat me well. The last fifty dollar bill ever I had, I spent on a broken-down red mare, and she's paid me nary a red back since."

"When was that, Bill? Give the particulars."

"Why, when I went sleighing last March, Charlie, down a railroad track, which I mistook for the turnpike. There was six weeks' sleighing in March then, and in fact it came near slaying me. Don't you remember the time, Charlie?"

"Why, how should I remember it, Bill? You don't suppose I was such a fool as to have been there with you just at that time. I wouldn't have been there with you for a hundred dollars. I don't go halves with you on any such scrape."

"I've thought, Charlie, how nice it would be to have a money Grace to put her hand in her pocket and pay off the bad debts a young man incurs in sowing his wild oats. They're deuced costly, Charlie, these wild oats are, I can assure you from experience. They are poor feed for fast horses and reckless drivers, I assure you. Unlucky farmers they, who sow many wild oats in their young days."

"They'll find a pretty poor crop if they get over into my field, Bill. If I had much of a one, I should have to get more than a dozen days' grace on the I. O. U.s."

"Maybe, Charlie, you would like to buy some of my wild oats, I would like to sell the fifty dollars' worth I spoke of."

"No, Bill, I decline buying, if that's a specimen. I don't envy you such a fine crop of wild oats. A man is foolish to buy them at any price when he can raise enough on his own ground. But come, Bill, it's getting late; are you going up yonder door-steps or not? Picture to yourself Miss Grace Lee waiting, with breathless

patience and anxiety, to receive that card of yours, which she will probably put under her pillow edgewise, to be tenderly pressed out by her fair head by morning."

"Well, I don't know, Charlie, what to think of your proposition. She will probably tell me to call next time; but as you very likely have tried it, maybe you can give me some good advice, or perhaps, you can tell me the result beforehand. I'll try the experiment for fun, anyhow, and have the pleasure of ringing the door-bell. I'll give it such a ding as will make Ben start if he is within hearing. If the servant comes, I will inquire if Ben is there, instead of inquiring for Grace."

"Good, Bill, that will do nicely. You are indeed an inventive genius. May you have grace, is my prayer for you."

With this, up the door-steps went Bill, but, to his vigorous pull of the door-bell, no servant or answer came. He rang again and again, with no better success, until at last, the result of his boldness making him timid, he stood meditating in the meantime (*very mean time* to him), some sweet melancholy words of Shakspeare, that just then seemed written for nobody else but himself, when the door opened, and the inside and first comer greeted the last and outside comer, with the ejaculation, "Good evening, Bill, I am happy to meet you under such fortunate circumstances. What in the world are you doing out here? Shall I call Miss Lee to bid you good-night, Bill, though she will not ask you in?"

"Pretty questions to ask a fellow, I declare, Ben. I should like to know what you have been doing in there all this time."

"I've been courting Grace, Bill, if you wish to know the particulars."

"As to that, Ben, you may court Grace Lee till doomsday; you will never win her. Your name, to begin on, is too homely to be written in Grace Lee's pretty memory-book."

"Why didn't you ring the bell, Bill, and get them to let you in?"

"Yes, Ben, there's another tough question, when I've rung the bell three times loud enough to make it deaf, or those in the house deaf, probably the latter."

"Don't, Bill, now, don't. It will not be very pleasant to have Grace use an ear-trumpet when you are courting her, and all because you rang the door-bell so hard as to make her deaf to all your entreaties."

"Well, Ben, I wish there wasn't a door-bell in Christendom. I declare, ringing them all to no purpose is a heathenish practice. It is wasting air and sound and finger muscles for nothing."

"Come, Bill, you don't think of ringing it again do you? Let's go down and have some oysters and refreshments, and we'll serenade Grace before we go, to get up an appetite."

Passing down the street the two young men joined the rest of their companions who were waiting, and the circle was once more complete.

As Grace and her friend Lizzie were about retiring, the mingled voices of the young men were wafted in sweet and beautiful harmony on the evening breeze.

## SERENADE SONG.

Come to me, love, in the calm still night,  
Where the beautiful twilight waits ;  
With her torch of pale and silver light  
At the evening's golden gates.  
To light thee in this quiet hour  
To love's blest isle and happy bower.

Come to me, love, while the stars so fair  
Keep their silent watches above ;  
'Neath their smiles to thee, oh, may they bear  
Bright, pleasant visions of love.  
To live within thy tender heart  
Long after dreams of day depart.

Come to me, love, when young Cupid spans  
His silver bow in the sky ;  
And shoots his arrows with cunning hands  
When loving spirits are nigh.  
Oh then shall slumber's pillow seem  
The footstool of love's fairy dream.

Come to me, love, from the land of sleep,  
Oh waft me back one sweet kiss ;  
One smile from thee, my heart will steep  
In a sea of radiant bliss.  
While thus I watch and linger here,  
And wish thy lovely presence near.

Come to me, dear one, from over the sea,  
Where thine eyelids are closed in sleep ;  
In the land of love I wait for thee,  
While thy memory sweet I keep.  
Farewell in dreams, I'll meet thee, love,  
Ere morning melts the stars above.

“How beautiful that singing is, Lizzie. It makes me think of the Golden City.”

“Yes, Grace, it is really charming. You must open the window and wave your handkerchief to them. But wait, let me get mine, and then we will both wave our ensigns.”

Soon, up went the window, and the two handkerchiefs waved like two little flags of truce from a beleaguered castle, to which the gentlemen replied by a gallant flourish of hats, when, by accident, both the handkerchiefs dropped from the windows, and went fluttering down like two white doves from the eaves to the sidewalk. Then followed a tremendous scramble and a fierce struggle, not for honor, or place, or wealth, but for two pocket-handkerchiefs. Alas! what has the ambition of man fallen to! With how little it is sometimes satisfied!

One of the hankerchiefs the young men secured. The other one fortunately was secured by Mr. Lee, who, happening to be out late that evening, arrived home just in time to snatch it from their grasp; and when they had recovered from their gallant charge, they were awakened to serious disappointment by discovering that the prize they had won, instead of being a memento of Grace, was only Ben's pocket-handkerchief which he had left behind him on his recent visit, probably for the reason of furnishing an excuse for calling again on Grace. From this moment bitter feelings sprang up between the young men, some of whom, in the excitement of the moment, not noticing the arrival of Mr. Lee, or his quick snatching of

linen, accused the others of appropriating the second handkerchief, and, with angry feelings, the young men separated, wholly forgetful of the hot suppers, champagne, and other etceteras, with which, like young lords, they were nightly wont to regale themselves.

## CHAPTER IX.

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A father's pride, a mother's joy.

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NEAR the city of New York, distantly overlooking its palaces of home and trade, stood an old-fashioned, square-built house, in all the calm and serenity of rural domain, with an air of comfort and grace about it, which betokened to the eye of the passer by, an inhabitant of wealth and refinement, and so indeed he was. Often he might be seen as he sallied forth on pleasure or business, accompanied by his faithful dog. Oftener though, an air of sombre loneliness gathered around the house, and lazily the faithful dog lay on the broad door-step, and basked in the sunshine of the long pleasant days, which signs interpreted the meaning, that young Master Evan was long and far away from home.

Entering the mansion, up the noble front steps, and into the sitting-room where the sun loved to rest awhile on his daily journey, the eye of the visitor caught a glimpse of the extensive library, whose rare and valuable volumes shone

With the golden wisdom of a thousand years.

Among the pictures on the walls hung three portraits, — father, mother, and son. In them the eye could easily



trace the strong family outlines of the bond that once bound them together in the life that was. The firm and clearly-chiselled features of the group told of a family of nature's royal line. In the son culminated the beauty and virtues of his parents, and of that family of three he was the only remaining representative. In the truest sense of the word he stood alone in the world. His father had been one of New York's most fortunate merchants, but in his prime the king of terrors had stricken him down, and ere another year had passed, the partner of his cares and joys slept side by side with him in the long, peaceful slumber of death. Their only child, Evan Dale, the hero of our story, had fortunately reached maturity when his father died, leaving him afloat on the wide ocean of affairs, which was to task his skill and energy to the utmost, and call forth all his resources suddenly into action. Nor was he wanting in this through ignorance, for his father had made him intimately acquainted with the exact state of his affairs, so that Evan, on his accession to the estate, was not troubled in the least by executors, guardians, or charitable societies, or other avaricious money sharks, which are so often seen lurking about a large fortune, as if anxious to swallow the whole.\*

\* In very many cases it is indeed sad to see the attitude which some so-called charitable societies, and other seemingly worthy institutions have presented, when a rich man, who perhaps, never gave a penny to a poor man in his lifetime, has, by a selfish will, left them the bulk of his property, thus cutting off his family from the benefit of it, so that, in order to support themselves, and obtain even the means of living, they have been forced to rely on the uncertain course of law to prove, whether they were most entitled to their own, and thus, possibly, after much trouble and expensive

Of such, Evan Dale was fortunately free. There were many expectants, however, who, presuming on Noran Dale's well-known liberality, doubted not that he would leave a large sum of his wealth to various purposes, and when they assembled with the few relatives to hear the reading of the will by the notary, a large and ponderous folio was unsealed and opened before them, which amply fulfilled their expectations, so far as the size was concerned, while, in their excited imaginations, they figured up thousands as the result; for, in their benevolent minds, as was Noran Dale's fortune, so would be his bequests; but when, in the centre of the centre sheet of the folio, duly signed and witnessed, was read in two lines these words, — I, Noran Dale, bequeath all my property to

litigation, they have been barely able to snatch just a livelihood from the selfish grasp of a cursed and mistaken philanthropy. I say mistaken, because, alas, there are too many who think they can do no good unless they have heaps of money, and the cry of such is, more money! more money! They would, if it were possible, sell the throne of the Almighty, and peddle the golden crowns and harps of the angels for a little more of this world's money, to squander on their useless schemes. When, alas, will they ever learn their mistake. The world is rich with the goodness of God, and with the overflowing charitableness of his disposition. On good and evil alike, his universal blessings descend, yet we have never heard that he had any money. The "almighty dollar" circulates not in his heavenly kingdom. God himself is the only almighty dollar in the universe. Out of it, as from a golden mint, all other dollars are made. All the dollars in this world, which circulate among men, are but fractions of the almighty dollar. We do not hear that Christ, when he was on earth, had any money to spend, and yet he did a great deal of good. If he were to visit us in these days, I am afraid his denunciations of some would be as bitter and severe as his treatment of the money-changers of old.

my dearly-loved and affectionate son, Evan Dale," the stampede of the expectants was instantaneous and universal. On the other sheets of the will, nothing was written that could be read by mortal eyes; but the blank white pages were the pure leaves of a good man's life, filled up and overflowing with noble deeds, written in the imperishable book of immortal life; for Noran Dale was one of the few who do good while they live.

Situated as he thus was, Evan Dale felt a freedom for which he was truly grateful. The nature of his father's business, at the time of his death, and the full tide of commerce on which it was suddenly left afloat, demanded all his time and ability to carry it successfully through. Like one who at sea is left in absolute command of a richly freighted vessel bound for distant climes, through stormy waves and rock-ribbed breakers, over the same track where many a goodly ship and her gallant crew have gone down

"To ride the main no more,"

so was Evan Dale, and truly it was an ocean on the land to him, — now in New York and Philadelphia, the next week in St Louis and Chicago, then away to San Francisco and Sacramento, now among the pioneer cities of the West, — then in the cities of New England and Canada, and then far away among the orange groves and streets of the sunny South, — next, perhaps, over the rough and troubled Atlantic, and, returning, to go pretty much through the same programme.

A pretty good tour for a young man to go through

with, perhaps some think. That indeed it was. No doubt many would like it too, provided they could go on pleasure, and take plenty of time and money. Of the latter needful it would take considerable, a moderate-sized carpet bag full, say, as money is now-a-days ; for, in fact, it takes a great deal to make a little.

In the healthy excitement of business, toned by travel, Evan Dale found a pleasure which was vigorous and elevating, as he saw much of men and the world, and was constantly moving in the society around him. Wherever he went he became an idol and a favorite. Beautiful and commanding in exterior, there was nothing of that vanity and affectation which spoils so much of physical beauty in both sexes, but, on the contrary, a firmness was set on the well-defined features, and a vigor of intellect shot forth from the clear blue eyes, which told that within was a mind and intellect of noble worth.

From his earliest boyhood Evan had been brought up and educated by a most worthy and learned tutor ; and, in this respect, his acquirements were fully equal to those of Grace Lee. He was, therefore, destitute of college honors, in the gaining of which, so many young men are ensnared and deceived. With the sunset of graduating day, sets all their ambition, and their strength and glory returns not with the morning sun. All that there was of them they have left behind. In the freshness of their manhood they have gone returnless to the tomb of their living years. Sad sight indeed ; for, unfortunately for them, the world is far different from college. It is easy to

win the laurels of the school-room, but hard, oh, how hard, to gain the world's crown of victory.

Of the great number of young men who graduate from our colleges, how few comparatively attain the high positions of honor and usefulness. The course pursued in most of our colleges, and the influences surrounding the student, would present a long list of minds blasted and characters ruined. In fact, there are but few who can run clear of the rocks and breakers of college life. The large number of young men from all quarters brought into close contact with each other, and the dead and dull influence which college professors and tutors, together with continued study, exert, rob youthful minds of their freshness and originality, and many, at the end of their college career, don the black graduating gown, recite their declamation, and the world hears no more of them. They are laid up, like books, on the upper shelves of society, whom none care to climb up and take down, for, practically, mankind never want to read in men what they have read in books.

From all the evils and hurtful rivalries and animosities of college life, Evan Dale was happily exempt. Owing to his position in life, and the time and attention required in settling his father's estate, he found it impossible to associate with many of his intimate friends of either sex. Many a fair one, with only the world in her heart, had waited in vain for the slightest particular attention from him. Their pride and vanity disappointed and wounded, they passed him by contemptuously, and searched for meaner game.

Deep in the search for real gold, what cared Evan for the pomp and tinsel of the world and its hollow votaries, to whom the reception of a certain article of silk or fabric of wear was all in all, while the fair flowers of humanity bloomed unseen by them, and the lilies of the field passed by unnoticed. With many, the going to balls and theatres and parties, makes up to them the sum total of life. With others, the driving of fast horses, and the rolling of ten pins and billiard balls, is their sole paradise, as if there was nothing better worth living for. But very few, on an average, lead a truly rational life, and here is the great cause for so much suffering and sin which humanity bears, and not until mankind learn how to live, and understand the true meaning of life, will it be otherwise.

O life! life! There is a fearful and glorious meaning in life! Each moment of dissipation, each indiscretion, each angry passion, each unkindly feeling, each cruel wrong done, each wayward footstep, is so much taken from the sum of life, never again to be restored; yet it is to be accounted for, in pains, agonies, and tears, until the unprofitable servant and the unjust steward of life, wish for death to come, but it never comes, for life is immortal.

But is life immortal? Is the beautiful land we dream of beyond the grave, inhabited by the departed spirits of mortals who have passed over the dark river of death? We ask it of the stars of heaven, but amid all their golden letters and their mystic language we can read no answer. Silently and distantly they forever twinkle on! We ask it of the earth, but its running streams and its many voices give no reply. We love to think of our dear departed

friends as living in the better land, but they speak to us not, they come at our call no more ; no token comes from them that they are living and love us still, nor is there any satisfactory assurance that we shall ever go to them or see them more.

We go to the cold, silent graves, where we have laid them down with tears, and they are still there in the strange repose of death, crumbling back to dust and earth. Not to our eyes does the pathway thence lead to a life beyond the grave; and after a few more years we shall be laid down in the mysterious sleep beside them, and, like them, for aught else we know, dream and think of the better land no more.

Ye who assert the immortality of the soul beyond the grave, answer satisfactorily if you can the question, Is life immortal? We speak often of the soul in its future state, where it is said to live on forever ; but first, are we satisfied of the state of the soul in this world? At night, overcome by care and toil, we sink to rest, and remain in a state of sleep and inaction. In this repose we are as if we never existed, Nothing that is passing around us are we conscious of. The robber may be grasping our wealth, and our mansions may be as a flame of fire around us, but still we sleep on.

Our hearts still beat, we still breathe, but where is the soul? Does the soul sleep with the body and share in its repose? If so, the soul is something very different from what many believe it to be, and if, like the body, it can weary and grow tired, it will never be able to sweep with drooping wings the heights of immortality.

There are many who have tried to find out the secret of immortal life, but all in vain. Not a few have imagined that, by peculiar courses of living, they could stretch out their mortal life like a piece of India rubber, as if the art of living was something to be acquired, rather than acquiesced in, as we find it.

Though we may not lengthen human life beyond its proper limits, yet we can easily shorten it by bad habits and reverse management. There are many who, on the strength of their credit, borrow of nature, but never pay, and run into fearful debts until their whole lives are mortgaged and foreclosed, and death, having a grab mortgage, takes possession.

Evan Dale probably was much this way of thinking; for though his cares were heavy, he found considerable time for recreation, and those who could have seen him would have said there was not a happier man than him, — that is for a single young man. By this I do not mean to say, that because people are married they are for that happier than those who are single. The happiness of married people must, I think, on an impartial average, be considered at a great discount from par. Marriage in itself is not happiness; it is the partner one gets for life, which decides the question.

The only thing that troubled Evan Dale was this very identical question of matrimony, and the difficulty he experienced in a satisfactory selection of a wife. After all Evan's travels he had not seen one whom he would risk his happiness with. Plenty there were who would have been pleased by the offer of his hand, and especially



that of his fortune. The hand with a good fortune in it was very tempting, but the heart, in matrimonial affairs, was not to be thought of. A splendid establishment, with horses and carriages, and servants in livery, are the marriage expectations of many; but the happiness of true love, and the blessings of loving and being loved, enters none of their thoughts.

"What is the use," said Evan Dale, in reply to one of his cousins who was on a visit to him, and who asked him why he didn't marry, "I can't afford it yet, Henry."

"Pooh, Evan, what do you mean by that. If I had the income you have got, that idea wouldn't trouble me in the least, and you are not cut out for a bachelor, I know."

"Well, Henry, that's what the trouble is in having so much income in such a case."

"Oh, if that's so, Evan, I should be happy to relieve you on that score."

"Thank you, Henry, I've no doubt you would do your best to help a poor man along, but you don't see exactly what I am driving at. Who, now, would you advise me to have?"

"You want me to get a wife for you, Evan? That I will do for a liberal commission. No doubt I could find some girl to suit you."

"Have you a list, Henry? If so, name them."

"Well, Evan, I will mention a few. To begin with, there's Miss Leslie of New York, she's quite charming."

"I wouldn't take the gift of her, Henry. I have heard her say she wouldn't marry any one whose income was

less than five thousand a year, just as if happiness consisted in this. Where true love is, Henry, the income is a secondary consideration. Many couples who married poor have grown rich with the world's wealth, by the true love they had for each other ; and as far as the income goes, Henry, I know of many who have had ten times the sum named by Miss Leslie, to their own destruction."

" Well, Evan, there's Miss Florence, another of the belles."

" Yes, Henry, she's one of the Fifth Avenue ones, and not any better in my view. You remember Bill Loring, who went to California, and is now very rich ? "

" Yes, Evan, and I recollect of having heard of some love passages occurring between them, though I do not know the particulars."

" Well, Henry, I will tell you. The upshot of it all was, that she would not have him, because he would not settle fifty thousand dollars on her. Although abundantly able to do it, he, of course, like a man of sense, declined, stating that he could not marry her under any such circumstances. Humph ! Such a woman as that, Henry, should be doomed to remain an irreconcilable old maid all her lifetime, and the joke of the affair is, her family have always been in moderate circumstances, and I doubt much, whether among all her relations, such a sum could be found free from debt. So you see she will never do, Henry. She loves money too well. If I married her, I don't know how large a sum she would want me to settle upon her."

"Well, Evan, next in order is Miss Bowditch."

"She'll never do, Henry. She don't want to marry a man under twenty-one. To do so, she declared, would be perfectly horrid and vulgar. The oldest bachelor she can find will suit her best."

"I declare, Evan, you are well posted. But there's Miss Clarence."

"Yes, I know her, Henry ; but I want my wife to do something else than to lounge around all day on sofa cushions. I declare I never saw her in the street afoot. I really believe she thinks the earth too mean for her feet to tread on."

"Well, Evan, there's Miss Hooper."

"Don't, Henry, mention her. I cannot take such a bundle of affectation as she is for a wife."

"Well, Evan, there's Miss Sawyer. What do you think of her?"

"Too much beauty, and nothing else to go with it, Henry. She will never do. Her beauty, too, will fade, and then she'll be all the time mourning over it."

"Well, how is Miss Laurel, Evan?"

"She ought to have a laurel, Henry, — I don't want to pluck the thorns out of it, at any rate. At Saratoga, Henry, just guess how many different dresses she wore between breakfast and dinner."

"I don't know, Evan, perhaps three."

"What, Henry, are you crazy? Only three dresses for such a fashionable young lady as Miss Laurel? Why, she would call you awful stingy, and an old miser to boot,

if that's all you are going to allow her for dresses at Saratoga. She actually wore eight dresses, Henry, in the short space of the forenoon. I don't know how many times I got introduced to her, until I began to think the Misses Laurels were very numerous, and looked very much alike, so that I could not tell them apart. If I should marry her, Henry, I should expect to see her change colors every two minutes,—too much laurel, Henry. It would be like a crown of thorns around the heart. Variety may be the spice of life, but it's not the spice for a wife. Go on with your list, Henry; you grow worse and worse. I'm afraid you will not earn that liberal commission you spoke of."

"Don't despair of my list yet, Evan. How does Miss Bird strike your fancy?"

"There, Henry, there's another one of your fine selections. I declare you would do first-rate to travel through the country, and show your beautiful matrimonial menagerie. As for Miss Bird, she's nothing but a live automaton. She moves through society as if she was hung on wires. She's too much of a prize for me. If any honest man aspires to her hand, the state of his purse is first examined. In a mercantile way she ascertains if he is good, and if he should be so impertinent as to fall below her high-water mark, she manages to politely tow him off the flats of her affections, and sends him under full sail off into deep water again. Depend upon it, Henry, such a bird is better in the bush than in the hand.

"To change the subject, then, Evan, how do you like Miss Hervey?"

"I declare, Henry, how much you have improved since I last conversed with you on this subject. I think your last selection might do."

"There, I thought so, Evan."

"But hold on, Henry, don't be so sanguine. Miss Hervey will do for any one who is fool enough to have her. From what I have seen of her, I should think her whole pleasure consisted in going a shopping. Whether she gets commission or not, I cannot say; but she gets dry goods enough. Any one who married her might set up a dry goods shop, and make his fortune by it. She might advertise for a husband in the dry goods line. She's a good patronizer, also, of saloons, and eats several extra dinners and suppers abroad at her dear father's expense, who wonders all the time where his money and his daughter's appetite is."

"Well, I give it up, Evan, and lose my commission."

"I see, Henry, I shall have to make a list myself. But mine will have but one name in it better than any you have named."

"Then, Evan, you have made a selection already."

"No, Henry, not yet. I am waiting for my angel of love to fly along to me, and my song is, 'The pretty girl I do not know.' I have seen, though, quite a number of pretty young ladies, as the world calls them, who were largely wanting in the attributes of truth and goodness of heart."

"Suppose, Evan, you go in for some high-bred aristocratic Southern lady, and heiress of plantations and slaves, and thus cut out the chivalry."

"Some daughter of some rebel regiment, Henry, who wears rings and ornaments made out of the bones of our brave soldiers, — some modest pink and pretty rose-bud of secession and fire-eaterdom, blooming in rarest beauty, in that new garden of the sunny South, whose golden gates open at Montgomery and close at Richmond?"

"Yes, Henry, and if after marriage she should secede, what then?"

"Why, coerce her, and put down her rebellious spirit by force of arms, Abe Lincoln like, all honor to him. On the whole, Evan, you would not wish to marry a Southern belle just yet."

"I guess not, Henry. But I'm glad I've got settled up with the South, for I don't want any of the bonds of the Southern Confederacy, either matrimonially or otherwise. Before election I was sure there would be some trouble, and I improved the opportunity, so that I have so much more money to lend to Uncle Sam."

"By the way, Evan, you remember Miss Leeds?"

"Yes, Henry, she does not get along very well with her husband, I heard. Where there is no mutual love between two parties, there can be no happiness, and nothing but true love in such can weed out the faults and imperfections of two characters that are brought together in marriage."

How often it is that we see those who ought to be all in all to each other, making division lines between themselves, which cause serious collisions, and create hateful passions in hearts which are under the sacred bond of

heaven to love each other. Some, catching a glimpse of love's friendly morning which dawns but once, have repented in time on the heaven-lit, tender waves of reconciliation, while many, hardened in heart, have passed onward, lonely and unforgiven, to life's cold Arctic realms.

## CHAPTER X.

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Alone—in the wide world—alone—  
But see, a wondrous dream and fair—  
To mystify my solitude—but how—  
Ah! how shall I interpret it?  
Would that it brought its own interpreter!  
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THE night was dark and stormy without. The raven wings of November beat heavily against the window panes. Evan Dale sat alone by a comfortable grate fire, while his thoughts turned on the subject of the late conversation. In very truth he felt alone in the wide world, and to a young man, situated as he was, the world often seems very wide. Hitherto his time and powers had been so occupied, that he had thought but little of the ineffable happiness of dear companionship, or the charm of a home which he could truly call his own.

As he sat quietly meditating, many fair faces looked in upon him, and many queenly forms flitted before his memory, but he saw not the one dear one among them all. The vacant place in his heart was yet unfilled. His father's business affairs finally settled, he felt relieved, and, with a true lover's devotion, he resolved to go forth on a tour of pleasure and matrimonial enterprise, in the hope of finding her whom he was henceforth to seek.



With this idea uppermost in his mind, he sought his chamber, and was soon lost in sleep. Harder and harder beat the storm, while the wind howled like so many demons let loose from their lair. Beautiful, though, was the scene to the eye of the sleeper.

Evan Dale dreamed, and in the lovely vision of that gloomy night, there arose before him a refulgent form of grace and loveliness, accompanied by an angel clothed in the shining garments of immortality, upon whose radiant forehead was written in letters of light, the word "Destiny," surmounted by a crown of glittering stars.

"Whence art thou, beautiful one?" cried out Evan in his dream, half in fear and delight.

No answer was returned, but the finger of the angel pointed upward, as if in reply.

"Whence comest thou?" cried Evan again, more earnestly than before.

● Still the finger of the angel pointed upward, whose countenance assumed rather a fierce expression, as it rested on Evan, as if forbidding a third repetition of the sleeper's fruitless question.

And Evan Dale, looking in the direction of the angel's finger, saw a golden book, around which glittered a wreath of stars similar to the crown of the Angel of Destiny, indeed so similar, as to seem but the glorious reflection of it. Soon the book was opened, and upon the shining leaf was written, as by the point of a diamond, two names which shone forth like characters of fire in the clear area of space.

"It is written," sounded a voice, but the Angel of Destiny spoke not.

"What is written?" asked Evan, while, in the eagerness of his curiosity, he was about to rush forward and snatch the book from the hands of the angel in charge; but the angel of Destiny forbade him, while a voice replied. "Two names are written, — two souls are bound together forever.

"And what are the names?" inquired Evan.

"Be not too curious," replied the voice, "and thou shalt know hereafter. In time thou shalt translate the language of eternity. Behold now?"

And Evan looked, and on the finger of the beautiful form the angel placed a ring of the purest gold, on which was engraved, as if with diamonds, four mystic letters, with a wreath of ring-work surrounding them.

Evan was about to grasp the hand of his fair visitant, but the stern look of the angel of destiny seemed to paralyze him, and he sank back as if exhausted, while the voice said, — "Not now, not now; she is mortal! Seek her in the world, and thou shalt find her. Despair not, for, from this moment, she shall be thine." Looking again, he saw his beautiful guests fade away and disappear in a cloud of light, which seemed to float away in the far distance, like a chariot of fire, in the wake of which, suddenly appeared two radiant stars, which gradually approached each other, when, meeting at the zenith, they seemed to mingle together into one, which, as Evan relapsed back into sleep, was gradually lost to sight in the countless multitude of the stars of heaven.

What to think of his dream, in the morning, Evan

knew not. It however made a deep impression on his mind, coupled as it seemed to be so opportunely with his resolutions and meditations of the night before. Was it a delusion? a silly and useless vagary of his brain? he began to ask himself.

But again he seemed to catch a glimpse of the stern features of the Angel of Destiny, and the voice seemed to whisper to him the cheering words of faith and hope. Besides, who could deny that the fair form he had seen in his vision existed in living and breathing reality. The more he reasoned within himself on the subject, the more confirmed became his assurance. So marked was the vision, and so strongly connected with the subject which was in his mind, that his faith grew suddenly firm in the doctrine of destiny. He would go forth and seek her, and possibly a kind Providence would lead him to the prize. In foreign lands, and amid scenes of romance and beauty, he would search for her. Mingling in the busy crowds and marts of the world, he would find, perchance, some trace of the fair visitor of the midnight hour. Filled with high hopes of the future, he started forth as brisk and gaily on his expedition as the white-winged vessel which bore him across the stormy Atlantic. Through familiar scenes he wandered once more, with slower steps than he was wont, while in circles of society and friendship he mingled more as a man of leisure. Heretofore his business had so engrossed him, that he had seemed like a flying orb in the path of space. Thus at leisure, Evan Dale was quite another man. The change in him was so complete, that many ascribed it to several causes. Some averred he had

met with misfortunes in business ; while others believed that some secret sorrow preyed upon him, — the imagined effects of which they endeavored to avert. But where the physician knows not the disease, he cannot cure ; and with many practitioners, the healing of a well person is harder than the healing of many sick.

To give all the details of Evan's tour of adventure would be like writing a remarkable book of travel and interest, and interwoven with rare sketches of life and society. Leaving Evan Dale to pursue his travels and adventures, we will revert back to Grace. As might be expected, for a young lady of wealth and beauty, Grace Lee had many suitors who bowed at the shrine of her matchless loveliness. Not the least assiduous in his attentions was Cousin Henry, who was deeply devoted to her, notwithstanding the broken vows he had left behind him. That he indeed loved her fervently he could not deny. Although a second love in reality, it had swallowed up the first in an intensity which could not be overcome. What if she was his cousin ; he had heard of cousins marrying before. Day after day he lingered in her charming society, and his attachment to her grew so strong, that he bore with haughty jealousy the attentions showed her by others, until the cause of his conduct was no longer a mystery to Grace, and he was sensible of a sudden chill in the atmosphere around him. The pleasant walks and rides with her grew few and far between. Where he had met with kindness before, he now experienced an unwelcome change. She grew quiet and reserved in his presence, and when not otherwise engaged, sought her own society,

or that of Lizzie. Cousin Henry knew not how to account for this change toward him in her manner and deportment ; the while his jealousy grew deeper, as he saw the attention she received from others, while she permitted none from him, and he already felt like an intruder and idler in his uncle's house. In such a dilemma he knew not how to proceed. A week had put many miles, as it were, between them. Had he in any way offended her ? Ah, his conscience told him he was guilty, and he needed no other evidence, while now and then before him a sweet entreating face rose up as an all-powerful witness. Yet, strange to say, he justified his conduct, offsetting it by the love he had for Grace. In his vexation there arose before him the image of the past, which, like a whip of vengeance, goaded him on to his discomfiture. But, notwithstanding, he would see Grace, and know where he stood. An opportunity was soon offered. Returning home that very night he found Grace in the sitting-room alone, waiting for her parents to return, while Lizzie had retired. To pass the time away more pleasantly, Grace had taken up an interesting book, and was busily engaged in reading it, when Henry entered the room. That afternoon Henry had attended an opera matinee, after having ineffectually invited Grace to accompany him.

“ Well, how did you like the opera ? ” inquired Grace, for want of nothing else to say, as he took a seat opposite her.

“ Oh, pretty well ; you should have been there,” replied Henry.

“ Why so ? ” again inquired Grace.

"You would have enjoyed it much, Grace."

"That depends upon circumstances, Mr. Williams," boldly rejoined Grace.

At this Henry perceptibly and involuntarily started, while the chair he sat in gave an uneasy squeak, as if it sympathized with the surprise of its occupant. This was the first time Grace had called him by that name, and no wonder it grated harshly on his ears.

"What circumstances do you refer to, Miss Lee?" inquired Henry, who, putting on a bold face, thought he would thus ask for information, and likewise return the compliment.

"What we enjoy, depends a good deal on circumstances," replied Grace, who, casting down her head again on her hand, resumed her reading, as if not caring to continue the conversation. For a long time she did not deign to lift her eyes up from her book, while Henry was evidently nonplussed as to the further mode of procedure in so novel a case, and with so uninterested a subject.

There was no knowing how long Grace would have remained in this position, had not Henry, in edging his chair up nearer to her, caused her at length to look up from her book and fix her attention, as if in expectation of a *tête à tête*, the precise character of which she was at a loss to determine.

"Miss Lee, I trust you will pardon me, if my company is unwelcome, or if I have in any way offended you," remarked Henry.

"That also depends upon circumstances, Mr. Williams. But how do you know, or what makes you think your company is not welcome."

"I have good reasons for supposing so, Miss Lee. At least your conduct toward me leads me to think so."

"Now think, Mr. Williams. Be honest with yourself,—have you not some good, sufficient reason, for knowing such to be the fact? If so, nothing I can say will make it clearer. I pray you forgive me for my coldness, if it seems unnatural or unwarranted."

"Pardon me, then, Miss Lee, if I have offended you through my love for you. Forgive my error, if I love you too well."

"Mr. Williams, you have offended me deeply, and not me only, but another whom you promised to love, and whom you are under the sacred vow of heaven to cherish."

"It is false, Miss Lee! It is false!" and here, in his excitement, Henry sank down on his knees at the feet of Grace, and poured forth his protestations of love and devotion, at the beginning of which, unnoticed by him, the occupants of the room were changed, and Henry, at the end of his lover's devotions, on looking up, saw not Grace, but, instead, looked up in the face of his first love and his betrothed, while Grace, at the conclusion of Henry's protestations, had again silently stolen into the room, and stood, with her handkerchief up to her eyes, an unwilling and tearful spectator of the effect of her bold but successful strategy.

Most unhappy man, then, was Henry. At the feet of her whom he had deserted, he wept bitter tears of despair and remorse, and this too in the presence of Grace, whom he had deeply injured. Alas! he felt in those bitter

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moments as if there was no repentance for him, and, taking his hat, he rushed madly out into the open air. Once more alone he recovered himself, and it seemed as if the world was new to him, and that a full age had rolled over it. The events of the past hour puzzled him completely. How Grace had become possessed of the fact of his betrothal to another, and by what means his first love had appeared so opportunely for herself, he was at a loss to determine. There was no way left for him but to return to his first love, and ask her forgiveness.

As he remembered those sweet moments of the past, when one whom he then truly loved, vowed to be his in return, he felt awkwardly ashamed of the course he had pursued, which had ended so differently from his too sanguine expectations. But would his first love receive him back with open arms to her trust and affections? On this point he felt doubtful in the extreme. If she should not receive him, and, instead, cast him off forever from her, as he felt he richly deserved, he was indeed a wretched man, and he already felt as if he had committed the unpardonable sin.

Whatever, though, might happen, he had made up his mind to act manfully in regard to the matter, confessing his errors, and asking and seeking forgiveness for them. With this resolution he returned home to his uncle's at a late hour, and passed up to his chamber, and found, much to his surprise, a note on the table, addressed to him in the well-known hand of his betrothed, which he hastily opened and read, as follows :



"DEAR HENRY, — Though greatly surprised and deeply pained at your course for some time past, yet I am convinced it arises from the peculiar situation you have placed yourself in, and the great temptation which has been presented to you, and which, I am very sorry you have not had the power to resist. Having made the acquaintance of Grace Lee, for the express purpose of interposing between you and the evil effects which your course would entail upon you, I have endeavored, and I trust have succeeded, in snatching you from bitter sorrow and disappointment. In a word, I will forgive you, on seeking my pardon, and, in the event of your truly acknowledging your error, trust you will accept my love as if nothing whatever of the kind had ever happened between us. In the event of your agreeing to the terms I herein name, I shall be happy as ever to see you. I am stopping at the United States Hotel, from which I shall leave tomorrow for New Haven in the ten A. M. train, and should be pleased to see you at the depot before I start.

"Yours truly,

"FLORENCE WALES."

It may be well to state here, that Florence Wales, the affianced bride of Cousin Henry, on hearing rumors of the course he was taking with regard to Grace, had that very day arrived and held an interview with her, and this it was which had made Grace so unusually reserved during her late conversation with him ; and, as if anticipating the future, she had planned and successfully carried out a

stratagem which was at once effective and salutary, and the jealous cousin, who would have sold himself for wealth, found the tables suddenly turned upon him, and, while vanquished and crest-fallen, could only be restored to his former happy position through his own repentance and the strength of woman's love. On the next morning, packing up his valise, he resolved to go back with his betrothed in the same train, and bidding adieu to the family, without seeing Grace, he departed from Lee Hall a better and a wiser man. Before he had gone far from the house, however, a servant was despatched with a note to him, which, on his opening it, read as follows :

“ MR. HENRY WILLIAMS :

“ DEAR SIR, — I bid you hereby an affectionate farewell, with my best wishes for your future happiness. On your seeking pardon of Florence, she will gladly forgive you. With woman's heart, and with many tears, I have interceded with her in your behalf. Seek her, Henry, and own your errors. Cast not off from you her forgiveness and pardon. Return once more, through her love, to the happiness of the past, of which even now memory fondly whispers. Seek true forgiveness, and that happiness shall still be yours through all the future. For the wrong you have done I already forgive you, and hereafter may your better angel guide you along the path of life. I pray you to prove yourself worthy of Florence, and remember that where much love is given, much also is required. May the happy hours you have spent with me be but the token of the happier hours you are to enjoy with

Florence; and may Heaven shed its richest blessings down on you and yours, is my parting wish. Adieu.

“GRACE LEE.”

A fortnight afterwards, Grace received a reply, in the shape of a wedding card and a liberal supply of wedding cake, from Mr. and Mrs. Henry Williams, and as Shakespeare says, “All’s well that ends well.” This Cousin Henry, in reality, believed to be true, when a magnificent service of plate was received from Cousin Grace and Uncle Lee, as a wedding gift.

The autumn days passed pleasantly onward, and time looked in again on a scene of splendor and festivity, which was the second regular levee of the season. Many were the jewels of this world that glittered there, and many the forms of beauty that pressed with happy feet the rolling hours. Observed by all was Grace Lee, who seemed, wherever she moved, the great centre of attraction. On this occasion she was more marked and peculiar, for amid all the display of jewels not a diamond or ornament glittered in her whole attire. A single flower only decked her person, which seemed to shine out more fresh and beautiful in contrast with the jewels around it.

Guy Carleton was not much of a believer in poetry, yet, at this time, a single line of verse occurred to him, which proved conclusively, that, though not altogether practical, it was sometimes true. Descended from a family which somewhat boasted itself of its long line of ancestry, Carleton felt in himself an unusual degree of importance. Wealthy, talented, and withal handsome in

exterior, why should he not win Grace Lee, he asked himself, while he resolved that he would at least try, and that too with his whole heart staked on the issue. Had destiny then appeared to him, and whispered her warning, he would have scouted the idea, as he was sanguine of success, as what true lover is not, however worthy or unworthy he may be.

As the sets were forming for the first dance, he proposed, and was accepted by Grace as her partner. So far, so good, thought Carleton to himself, as he duly appreciated the favor. Now there was nothing that Carleton prided himself on more than his dancing; and he felt unusually happy in being complimented by the beautiful heiress, who remarked, —

“You dance very finely, Mr. Carleton.”

“Thank you, Miss Lee, it is my best accomplishment. It is the one I most excel in.”

Here Grace paused, and looked at Carleton earnestly, as if to fully understand the meaning of his last remark. To hold dancing as his best accomplishment, struck Grace as a rather peculiar admission on his part.

“As my dancing is so pleasing to you, Miss Lee,” Carleton continued, “I would request the honor of your hand for the next dance.”

“Certainly, Mr. Carleton,” replied Grace, “if it pleases you, and as no one else appears to dispute your preference.”

“To tell the truth, the waltz struck up by the band was a new and difficult one, which but a few could dance, and in this, Carleton’s highest accomplishment shone forth both

to his own wonder and that of others, who could not but acknowledge in this instance the force of it.

Carleton himself could hardly account for the advantage thus gained, as if by accident. To dance once with her was the extent of his ambition, but to dance twice with her in succession was a fete he had never dreamed of. It was like making a march in Euchre to him with his partner assisting. He already bade fair to dance with her the rest of the evening, and he felt in fact greatly in danger of losing his heart to her. If he had danced with her a third time, there was no telling what might have happened; but, alas, how many a flower Destiny nips in the bud of bloom!

Carleton's success with Grace thus far was more than he had anticipated, and the encouragement he had received he had already credited to Grace's preference and favor.

As the band struck up again, however, Grace had another partner. At each step Carleton's eyes followed her through the room, as if seeking for some further expression of regard and favor; while many of his friends congratulated him on his success, and looked upon him as the favored one.

But what! Can it be true? He looked again, and the single flower which was Grace's only jewel, bloomed in its place no more. Had she conferred it on any one as a token of her love and esteem, to be treasured as a dear memento? thought Carleton to himself. It might, though, have fallen on the floor accidentally. If so he would indeed search for the precious relic, and, though lying

crushed on the unfeeling flowers of the carpet, take it up tenderly, and curse the foot that spoiled it. For the rest of the evening Carleton was on an extensive search of discovery for the missing flower. In truth, he was in great danger of becoming a botanist. Carleton, though, never loved flowers very well. There was something, though, about this flower which was remarkable. As he continued on in his search for it, his conduct appeared to his friends at once strange and unaccountable. By turns jealousy, despair, revenge, and disappointment gnawed at his heart-strings. And all for a flower. The only consolation he had was in its uncertain fate.

Who answers for this nameless flower  
Once worn by her I love?

Grace herself missed the flower, but said nothing, thinking in her own mind that possibly Carleton might have watched the opportunity and covertly plucked it, as a coveted treasure. So absorbed was Carleton in his search, that, on giving it up, he discovered that he was almost the only one remaining of the brilliant party, most all having departed for home, Grace included. Taking his leave, he passed by Grace's house, lingering for awhile until the light in her chamber disappeared, and then departing for home. On taking off his coat in his chamber, previous to retiring, the missing flower worn by Grace, suddenly dropped down at his feet. With an exclamation of surprise the flower was instantly transferred from the floor to his lips, to which it was pressed with the

most fervent devotion. He started back, however, as if wounded. A thorn had pierced his lips, and covered the fair flower with a dew of blood. Despite the thorn, the mystery was now clear to him. In his dancing with Grace, the flower had become disengaged, and had dropped quietly down his coat sleeve where it had since remained. A pretty place for a flower, thought Carleton to himself, as, taking out his penknife, he cut the thorn off and once more pressed it with all a lover's devotion to his lips.

Sweet flower, the thorn extracted  
Thou shalt stanch the blood  
And heal the wound it made.

Carefully putting the flower away in a favored place, Carleton retired to dream of its lovely wearer.

Through all the evening Grace had searched for him she was so deeply interested in ; but she found him not, and she was still left to conjecture. Oh, that she knew where she might find him, was the burden of her wishes. From day to day she sought him in the crowded street and the brilliant hall and concert room, but so far she had sought in vain. Her faith though was unshaken. The almost ideal hero still haunted her, and she trusted implicitly in the future.

## CHAPTER XI.

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The Frost king's come! the river bright  
Shall cease its pleasant flow;  
And the frozen lake through the winter night  
With beacon fires shall glow;  
As the skater glides o'er the gleaming ice  
Like a shadow bold and free,  
With a hip, hurrah! and a bounding heart,  
And a voice of merry glee.

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THE next week, early one fine clear morning in December, Grace, after breakfast, took down her skates and sauntered forth to enjoy the bracing exercise which winter so forcibly suggests. The frost king had hung his pendant diamonds on the leafless trees, as if to compensate them for their loss, by bestowing upon them the crown jewels of Nature. The roads and sidewalks were also covered with a bright sheen of variegated hue and glitter, which mirrored forth with splendor the rising sun and his welcome rays. To have seen Grace in her skating dress would have furnished the painter with a rare picture. Without being extremely cold, the air was sufficiently bracing to fan the roses on her cheeks into full bloom, which were heightened still more as the circulation kept pace with the cold steels, as they glided with the breath of the frost smoothly onward.



Skating, as it now is, may be looked upon as a truly American institution, and has, of late years, rapidly grown into favor with all classes. And yet the time was, not long since, when skating was confined principally to school-boys and to those who had not entirely forgotten boyhood's sports. For a lady to skate then, was considered insupportable and a breach of good morals, and, in fact, it was considered so by a great number of the sterner sex, who were as cold and unconcerned on the subject as the ice they never skated on. But time, luckily, has wrought a wonderful change, and they who cannot or will not skate are not at all to be envied.

The ball-room, glittering with its many forms of light and beauty, and heightened by stirring music, is a beautiful sight; but the skating park, alive with its merry skaters, is something to be looked at and admired, and this is because it is so varied in its character, and so removed from the restraint of form and ceremony, thereby rendering it free and open to social improvement and happiness. To prove the truth of this, ask a young lady to dance with you, and then to skate with you, and you will see immediately the difference. On the other hand, however, there are but few comparatively of either sex who skate well. To put on a pair of skates, and stagger round like a drunken man, relying upon every one in general for support to sustain the perpendicular line of gravitation, is an awkward acquirement, and one which is highly improper for the occasion. Again, to imagine that any one who you see cut a certain figure, a good skater, shows a want of judgment in the case, for good skating consists not only

in cutting a certain figure well, but also in cutting a great many of them with perfect ease, and the one who can execute the most figures in the easiest manner is the best skater.

On this morning, in particular, the skaters had turned out in force, it being the first ice of the season, which was soon ringing with the merry laugh and the clear echo. Here and there the straightforward skaters moved along as if on the wings of the wind, while others indulged in their favorite rings and figures; while some, who were just learning to skate, propelled and waddled along, something after the fashion of a steamboat with its side wheels broken. Happy indeed are they who can skate, for skating is one of the happiest enjoyments of life. A true benefactor of the race was the one who first invented skating. Sweet memories are those which cling around our skating hours, that glided by as if on runners of gold o'er diamond paths of life. Touched not by the chill frost of spring, or the hot breath of summer, bloom the flowers of the winter time!

Beautiful looked Grace in her skating costume, as with ease and rapidity she moved onward over the frozen surface, while a continued hum of admiration and praise circled around her, as well it might; for not only in beauty, but in skating, she carried the palm in triumph.

But who is that skating with Grace Lee? is the next question, causing many hearts to beat in considerable anxiety. Many hoped it might be her father, but they were disappointed; for, in reality, it was quite a good-looking young man, and withal, a tolerable skater, who so gladly

held Grace Lee's hand in his own, while they so gracefully went the outward roll together.

Now Charlie Ford had many good qualities, and was much beloved by his friends and comrades, who, as they saw him and Grace skating together, thought no couple on the pond better suited to each other.

But how often we see those who, in outward appearance, seem well suited to each other, hiding from the eye of the world, under the deceitful cover of circumstances, the deep, black, and sometimes awful abyss which forever separates them. As far as the outward eye goes, they seem happy when together, but never are their names and hearts to be united in the bond of love. Unseen is the breach which forever lies between two such hearts, over which no gentle dove flies with the olive branch of reconciliation, nor no mediator appears, and the hand of destiny can build no bridge to connect them.

Being somewhat tired, Grace and her companion took a seat where they overlooked the lively and interesting scene.

"I suppose you are very fond of skating, Miss Lee."

"Yes, Mr. Ford, it is really a charming exercise, and I enjoy it very much."

"You must be here this evening, Miss Lee, and you will witness something very unique and amusing."

"What is that, Mr. Ford?"

"Why, we are to have a skating carnival, a la Venice, if the night permits."

"That will be a good idea, Mr. Ford, really. I should enjoy nothing so much. How many masqueraders are there to be?"

“ Oh, some four hundred ladies and gentlemen, Miss Lee. They are called the Private Ice Masquerade Association.”

“ What a delightful association that must be, Mr. Ford, and suggestive of grand, funny things on ice.”

“ They are really so, Miss Lee, and they give their first performance to night.”

Evening came, and shone forth, full, calm, and pleasantly, making the masqueraders glad, as their fantastic forms glided along, like so many phantoms, to the river side.

The scene that there met the view was weird and mystic in the extreme, surpassing even the silent, mystic procession of the humbugged and humbugging “ Sons of Malta,” which occurred in a well-known city some time ago. At intervals, along the river, were placed piles of brush and kindling-wood, which were lit by flaming torches, which cast around a lurid glare, producing a fine effect, lighting up the foreground, while the country around on one side, and the city on the other, with the frozen river, like a sea of glass, between them, made it seem like the regions of another and a brighter world; while the masqueraders seemed to have risen from the lower depths of darkness and despair to revel awhile on enchanted ground. A band of music, stationed at a distance, indulged in fairy and romantic strains, from notes made especially for the occasion, which added much to the interest of the river, while promenade marches, gallops, and waltzes, were indulged in by the gay masqueraders. Overhanging the river were arches and festoons, in which were hung Chinese lanterns and colored balloons, with

lights attached in shapes of gold and silver stars and glittering rings, which made a fairy-like firmament over the scene.

The hours were speeding on merrily, when a cry of distress arose sharply on the cold winter air. A grand rush was immediately made to the scene of the calamity. The ice had broken, and among the rest was a young lady in the treacherous current of the river, which bade fair to sweep them under the ice. But aid fortunately was at hand. Seeing that no time was to be lost, a skater, with a rope around him, who was evidently prepared for such a disaster, rushed in, and passing the rope around the lady, threw the other end to the nearest shore, which rope was soon grasped by willing hands, and the precious burden hauled in and landed in safety. But the danger had not yet passed. The rescuer was in a more dangerous situation than the rescued. As drowning men grasp with a death-hold any thing which is in their reach, so they grasped hold of the brave rescuer with a tenacity nothing could withstand. A minute more, and he would have been swept under the ice, had not Mr. Lee, who happened to come along just at that time, advanced to his rescue, and, with much difficulty and the aid of those around him, he finally succeeded in rescuing him, and those who were clinging to him, from their perilous situation. On the lady being recognized, she proved to be Miss Grace Lee, and, under the circumstances, she was kindly cared for, though her hoop skirt in the water served as a life buoy by which probably she escaped. To bring the almost insensible, and apparently dying rescuer of Grace to life, though, was

a more difficult task. As all this happened in a brief period of time, it did not interfere materially with the evening's sport. In the words of a gay masquerader, it was a cold bath, but it might have been colder. A guard being placed around the broken ice, the masqueraders resumed their enjoyment, as if nothing had occurred to mar the occasion.

The next day but little else was talked of, save the grand skating carnival, and the incidents of the double rescue connected with it. By good care, Grace recovered from the accident speedily, without cold or fever, as a result of her cold-water experiment; but her rescuer was ill with a raging fever the next morning, attended occasionally with spasms of delirium, during which he would cry out most wildly, "Oh, save me! Save me!" as if his mind still clung to the perilous scene of the preceding night.

How fearful a thing it is for the mind to hover in agony over the abyss of death. Mr. Lee, as soon as he had seen the young man safely home, immediately despatched his family physician to attend immediately on him, who, after seeing the sufferer, pronounced him in a very critical situation, which would require his utmost skill. He recommended the patient to be kept quiet as possible, and no one was allowed to see him but the nurse and watchers. For several days he lingered in suspense between life and death, and when a month had nearly passed, he slowly and fully returned to life and consciousness. It was then that Grace, with the doctor, daily visited him, and no gentle art of woman's was left untried to win the patient back to strength and health; and in course of time he

was convalescent and able to ride out. Once, and only once, he had asked the nurse who the handsome young lady was who called to see him so often. On being told, however, that it was Grace Lee, the young lady he had saved from drowning in the river, his mind seemed to wander, and he instantly relapsed into a state of listlessness, while his memory seemed desperately struggling to recover its lost ground. Slowly his mind groped back to the time and place where the thread of life seemed to have been dropped, when, as if by a sudden flash of intelligence, the whole circumstances dawned upon him; and when Mr. Lee and his daughter again called upon him, he was able to intelligently receive their thanks, and to yield his own in return for their kindness and care.

A sadness brooded over him, though, as he thought how much better it would have been to have saved Grace, and then to have saved himself, or have been saved by some one else than Mr. Lee. It was untoward indeed, he thought, to rescue the young heiress, and then the next moment to be saved from the same fate himself by her father, whom he heartily hoped might have been the last person in the world who could have rendered such a favor. Would that his claim on the young heiress were only stronger, thought he to himself; yet he was thankful for the circumstances which had brought him into such near relation with so lovely a creature.

But Harry Brooks was in truth a dissipated young man. The only son of wealthy parents, he had been brought up as a child of the world. Society flattered him, and gay, thoughtless comrades courted him. His

cup of life was filled only with the foaming quaff of earth's pleasure, and to enjoy himself in a fashionable manner was his only ambition. His companions congratulated him on the fortunate chance which had secured to him the friendship of the beautiful heiress, and stimulated by the advantage it gave him, he resolved, if possible, to win her. Many happy hours he spent with Grace. Often he went to ride and walk and skate with her, and in her society a new life seemed to glimmer and dawn through his dissipated habits upon him.

Ah, Harry Brooks! Love not too well! Enjoy these hours you spend with Grace, these happy hours, while yet you may. Strong as their influence is, they will not prevail upon you to cast off your evil habits. Would they might make a deeper impression upon you. Happy hours indeed are they, but they are only hours at the best. Sweet indeed they will be, if when summer comes, they shall bud and bloom into long sunny years.

Though Harry loved Grace almost to distraction, yet he could not deny that there was something in her manner which he could not fathom, and which he dared not ask an interpretation of. Through all her kindness to him there seemed to run a line of coldness and reserve, which he had tried in vain to pass, and which, in fact, was the picket guard of destiny around Grace Lee, for which he could give no countersign.

Often in conversing with Grace a tone of sadness rang upon his ear, and her eye seemed to keep back a starting tear, when she looked upon him with glances in which affection, pity, and reserve seemed struggling for the mas-



tery. But, to tell the truth, Harry Brooks, as he looked back on his young lifetime, squandered in wild and reckless dissipation, which fact, perhaps, Grace Lee knew as well as himself, he felt in no small measure guilty and unworthy. The friendship begun was still only a friendship, and it seemed to admit of no other character.

That they should be friends, and spend many hours together, was not to be wondered at. Grace, however, kept counsel with her own heart. In secret she compared Harry Brooks with the unknown hero, and the preference stood in favor of the latter. Two others, quite as devoted, stood the same comparison with the same result. In the balances of love she weighed them, but her heart outweighed them all. From this feeling that she could not love Harry, sprung the reserve which so puzzled him. True, Grace felt grateful for the service he had rendered her, but that, in fact, was no reason why she should feel obliged to love him. Moreover, she felt thankful that it was so promptly offset in return by her father. The force of this Harry felt himself. In his conclusions, however, he might be mistaken. His only hopes grew out of ignorance of his position. He could not but be slightly encouraged at the preference which Grace gave him for a time over other comers, and, at times, he could see she took particular pains to please him. Some time elapsed in this manner during which Harry grew more devoted to her than ever. The Lee mansion was ever open to him, and Grace was always there to welcome him. So constant were Harry's visits that it was generally supposed they were engaged.

Having heard some rumors to this effect, and being somewhat anxious (as most mothers are in regard to their children's matrimonial schemes), Mrs. Lee asked Grace one morning, at breakfast table, if she had heard the news.

"What news? mother," inquired Grace, as if in great expectations.

"Why, I have heard, Grace, that you were engaged to Harry Brooks. If so, I trust you have not taken this step without serious consideration."

"I must say, mother, that you surprise me. I have no thought of any such thing. Who told you so?"

"No one in particular, Grace, but several have asked me the question, and, like them, I thought I would go to head-quarters and find out."

"Well, mother, it's news to me, really. I shall have to ask Mr. Brooks if he has heard any thing about it. No doubt, if such were the fact, it would be very agreeable to him."

"And, moreover, Grace, Mrs. Brooks has hinted around that she hopes Grace Lee is not trifling with her dear son Harry."

"I don't think I have been trifling with him in the least, mother. If he chooses to come and see me, I cannot very well refuse him. To do so would place me in a very bad light; and, on the other hand, I have given him no special encouragement, or shown him any thing more than common friendship."

"Then you do not love him, Grace, I should say."

"If I do, mother, I am not conscious of it at all."

"I really wish, Grace, that he would not come here so often."

"Who's that you do not wish to come so often?" inquired Mr. Lee, who had just come into the room, and caught the tail end of the conversation.

"Why, Harry Brooks is the one I was speaking of, and quizzing Grace about," replied Mrs. Lee, "and I have heard that his mother has hinted that Grace must not trifle with her dear Harry's affections."

"Ah, that's what I wanted to see Grace about. Old Mr. Brooks has hinted the same thing to me, and I am happy to know that he takes so great an interest in his only son's welfare. It would have been well if he had taken that interest in him before. However, Grace, I trust you have not wounded his feelings."

"Not that I know of, father; I have always treated him well, and we are on friendly terms with each other."

"And nothing more, Grace, I trust."

"No, nothing more, father."

"Then I am very glad, Grace."

"Why so, father?"

"Oh, I will tell you in time, Grace. Has he made any proposals to you yet?"

"None that I know of, father."

"Then, Grace, I cannot see but that all is well."

"Why so, father? you speak as if you knew something more about the young man than you would like to tell."

As Mr. Lee here took his hat, and departed for down town, he made no reply to his daughter's last remark, as, having lightly sounded her feelings in regard to Harry,

and feeling satisfied of the result, and giving her rather a significant hint under cover, the subject was for awhile dropped, where it had ended somewhat abruptly.

Each hour is freighted with its own dark cares,  
Those which the future own, come unawares;  
'Tis ignorance spreads the present's golden sail,  
Which gives no sign of coming storm or gale.

## CHAPTER XII.

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A very bad heart makes a very bad man.

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THE next day Harry resolved to know his fate. He would propose to the young heiress, and thus decide for better or worse the suspense which like a dark curtain hung over him. With this resolution in his mind, he came that afternoon as usual, and was pleased to find Grace alone, which he considered fortunate. After the usual welcome, Harry proceeded at once to his subject.

"Miss Lee, I have come to ask an especial favor of you."

"If it is within my power to grant, Mr. Brooks, I am at your service."

"Ah, you know not Miss Lee what I am about to ask."

"True, Mr. Brooks, and you know not whether I shall grant it or no. If you did, there would be no need of either question or answer."

How ignorant she is, thought Harry to himself, while just then there was an awkward lull and pause in the conversation, when, as if to happily relieve the same, the door-bell rung, and the servant girl called for Grace.

"Excuse me for a few moments, Mr. Brooks," remarked Grace, as she went down stairs.

The few moments passed as if they were heavy hours

to Harry. Often, in a few moments, long years have grown up between one and the happiness which might have been instantly grasped and possessed. Not so with Harry, however, for there was no happiness there for him.

Alas for Harry Brooks! For like many others he loved in vain!

Going down to the door, Grace received from the penny-post man an anonymous letter, which she at once opened and read, the main feature of which was the great stress laid upon Harry Brooks's recklessness and dissipation of character, and warning her to beware of him. Hastily putting the missive in her pocket, she returned to the sitting-room, wondering much who it could be who took such an interest in her welfare. Could it be that Harry was so dissipated as to call down upon him the stigma of such a letter, queried she of herself; but she could not gainsay it, and she began to find a clue to the mystery of her father's remarks that morning, which hinted in the same direction.

Ah, Harry Brooks! you little dream of the harvest you have sown and laid up in store for yourself, which you cannot avoid reaping!

"I was thinking how many pleasant hours I have spent with you," remarked Harry, continuing the conversation on Miss Lee's return to the sitting-room.

"I am exceedingly gratified, Mr. Brooks, if my society has been a source of pleasure to you."

"The favor I refer to, Miss Lee, is a great and important one. It is the last and only favor I may ever ask. In one word, Miss Lee, I love you, and offer you my hand and heart. I am yours to accept or refuse, to be made

happy or miserable, as you determine. Am I so happy, Miss Lee, as to know that you love me in return ? ”

Here Grace, taking her handkerchief from her pocket, buried her face in it, as if loth to answer him, and wept in pity for the pain which she knew he would feel at her refusal.

Astonished, and with serious misgivings, Harry waited for an answer.

It was some time before Grace recovered herself, and when she did, she simply referred him to her father, promising him an answer from herself the next day.

With this Harry was very slow to be content, and Grace's weeping was not at all according to his programme, neither did he know what to make of it ; and an unfavorable answer to his suit was with him an almost foregone conclusion. Taking his hat, he was about leaving, when Grace interrupted him, saying, “ whatever may happen, Mr. Brooks, remember we are still friends as of old ; ” then, taking his hand tenderly in her own, she bade him a last and affectionate farewell, while in her eyes, still red with weeping, he almost read the unfavorable answer of her heart.

Ah, Harry Brooks, linger awhile ! Make the most of this last parting with her you love, for never more shall you see her, never again shall you behold her !

On departing, Harry walked quickly and smartly down the street, as if bound on business of a highly important and urgent character.

So intent was Harry on this, that he did not notice

who followed behind him at a little distance. On he went until he came to a street somewhat minus as to any great pretensions to an aristocratic character. Stopping at the corner, Mr. Lee, for it was none other than him, watched Harry as he went down and entered, as if by a concealed door in the wall, a well-known gambling den, noted for its many victims.

With Harry, gambling was his great passion. Night after night he had gone from Grace's society to the more fascinating society of the gay gambling saloon, where, amid scenes of lust and festivity, whole fortunes were lost with the toss of the dice and the throw of the card.

"Ah, here is Harry!" shouted many voices, as he entered, thus unanimously proving that he was a great favorite among them.

"Well, Harry," asked one, "Have you proposed to her?"

"That I have, surely," replied Harry.

"And what did she say to you?" asked another of the gamblers, as he gave another throw of the dice.

"Ah, you ought to have seen her, Bill, she actually wept for joy. There goes three hundred, boys, on the strength of it," remarked Harry.

A few tosses of the dice, and Harry had lost.

"Three hundred more, boys," he cried.

A few moments more, and Harry lost again.

"I will lend you, Harry."

"Well, give me a hundred, Jim."

The play proceeded, and Harry won.

"Here goes all again, boys, heave away," and Harry



won again. Success seemed to have lit upon him, and he continued to win for the rest of the evening.

Mr. Lee, who was watching outside all the while, was all of a sudden startled by the exit of one of the losers, a young man, who, striking his hands in despair to his head, as if to batter memory out of his brain, exclaimed to himself loud enough for Mr. Lee to hear him, "I'm lost! lost! What will my father say to me? I have lost all my money! Oh, what shall I do?" and, sinking down on the curb stone, he buried his face in his hands, the picture of utter and hopeless despair.

Mr. Lee, touched with pity, approached him cautiously, and sat down beside him, but in vain he sought to console the young man, for he was inconsolable. It was the young man's first step in crime, and it had proved disastrous.

Mr. Lee, however, learned from the young man, that Harry Brooks, knowing he had received a considerable allowance of money that day from his father, had enticed him into the trap set for him.

Promising the young man assistance in recovering his money, Mr. Lee, not wishing to be known in the matter, procured the services of a couple of watchmen, when it was planned, that on Harry Brooks coming out, he should be seized immediately, and made to refund the young man his money, or go to the station-house, and stand prosecution and its consequences.

On making his exit, therefore, Harry was greatly surprised, when he was rather rudely caught hold of by the coat collar, and ordered to refund. Seeing the dilemma

he was in, he, together with his companions, immediately refunded to the young man the amount lost, and Harry was set free.

"Never mind, Harry, you are to marry an heiress soon, you know, and then you will have a pile of money," remarked one of his comrades.

"Hic, hic, hic, you don't (hic) say so, Bill. I advise you (hic) to do the same (hic)," exclaimed Harry, somewhat impeded in his speech by a glass of wine concealed within.

Stopping to hear no more, and satisfied at the result of his successful reconnoissance, by which two objects were attained, Mr. Lee walked slowly homeward with his suspicions as to Harry fully confirmed.

The next evening Harry Brooks called on Mr. Lee, in regard to the proposition he had made Grace the day before, and to inquire if the same was favorable.

"Then you really love my daughter, if I understand you," remarked Mr. Lee, after Harry had opened the case.

"Yes, Mr. Lee, I have that confession to make to you. I have made the same confession to Miss Lee, and she has referred me to you."

"Do you really think, Mr. Brooks, that Grace loves you in return?"

"I cannot say, Mr. Lee."

"The next question, Mr. Brooks, is this. Do you really consider yourself worthy of her? Now beware, Mr. Brooks, be very careful how you answer this question, for I am not merely passing words with you. Consider well, ere you answer, as nothing but the truth will do."

"I have nothing more to say, Mr. Lee, than that I love your daughter."

"Have you none other than a lover's confession to make, Mr. Brooks, in reply to my last question?"

I do not understand you indeed, Mr. Lee, nor what you refer to."

"Never mind, Mr. Brooks, I see you evade my inquiry. I will relieve you from replying to any such questions."

"Good — how kind" — thought Harry to himself, as he patiently awaited what further Mr. Lee had to offer; while Mr. Lee looked at him sternly and seriously, ere the thunder-bolt descended upon him, expecting him to say something, but Harry was silent.

Mr. Lee continued.

"I said I would relieve you, Mr. Brooks, from answering my last question; and now, Mr. Brooks, I assure you, solemnly and finally, that my daughter shall never be the wife of a sot and a gambler."

Harry started as if a viper had bit him. In a moment he saw himself in all his hideousness and deformity.

"Seek not to deny it, Mr. Brooks. Here is the proof. Take this paper, and read that piece in relation to the young man you enticed, and deny if you can, any knowledge of it."

Tremblingly Harry took the paper, and read his guilt. He could not refuse, as there was in Mr. Lee's manner an imperativeness he could not resist.

"Pardon me, Mr. Lee," he pleaded, "and I will reform."

"Look not to me for pardon, Mr. Brooks, for it is

beyond my power. Go and ask pardon of the many victims you have enticed and betrayed, and, if you can, make full reparation to them. This done, Harry Brooks, and then I will forgive you; but however much you may reform, never can you be aught hereafter to Grace Lee. Here, Mr. Brooks, stay awhile. Take this last token, this last memento of her you have loved! Dote on this letter fondly, for it is blotted with the many tears she has shed in your behalf! Remember, you are to see her no more. This letter is her final farewell. Take also this miniature of her, and cherish it as the rarest treasure you may possess. She is grateful to you, and pities you, and would be your friend, but never can she love you or see you more. Understand, Mr. Brooks, she does not cast you off on account of your sins. If you were innocent as a child, she could not love you. Of your guilt she is as yet unacquainted, and this is the reason I give you her letter and miniature. As you therefore read this letter, and view this miniature, may you repent and become a wiser and better man, and some other than Grace Lee will love and treasure you. Farewell, Mr. Brooks, and may you take the true road to repentance and reformation."

How Harry Brooks considered Mr. Lee's advice was known the next morning, when the community was startled by the news, that a young man, belonging to one of the first families in the city, had been murdered in a fashionable gambling saloon, and that the murderer, who belonged also to a first-class family, had fled for parts unknown.

Harry Brooks, with his heart steeped in remorse and despair, had rushed from Mr. Lee's house that evening to his usual midnight resort, appearing more like a demon than a human being, as with clenched hands and blood-shot eyes, and lips firmly set, he staked a large sum, and threw the dice, and having lost, he instantly drew a revolver and shot the winner dead ; then, seizing the stakes, immediately fled under cover of night, and ere morning dawned was many miles away. Eluding the railroads and turnpikes, he kept on his way by night, selecting some retired place to rest in the daytime. Often he would start forward more swiftly in his midnight flight, as if the ghost of the murdered man haunted his steps. Wherever he went the fearful image haunted him, and seemed to glare out at him from every bush and from every tree, while he trembled as if already shaken by the hand of the avenger. Often, when resting from his wanderings, he would start up in fright and fear.

As if he heard in every rustle of a leaf,  
A human tread.

At times he would take out Grace's letter from his bosom, and eagerly peruse it, as if to escape from the gnawing worm of agony and remorse, and then, unclasping the miniature, he would gaze on the lovely features within, and then put his lips to it, as if to imprint a kiss, and then replacing both letter and picture tenderly in his bosom, and wiping away his tears rudely with his hand, he would resume his wanderings.

## CHAPTER XIII.

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And dost thou love me, and thou too;  
Beware, then, else thou love too well.  
For love in this world is too often  
A precious jewel rudely tossed about  
To whosoe'er may catch it.

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FRANCIS FORD and Guy Carleton were intimate friends, and with no attempt at concealment, they were rivals for the hand of Grace Lee. In rank and standing in society, the two young men were equals, and their families were on excellent good terms with each other. Of the two, though, Carleton was rather the best looking, which fact is sometimes a decided advantage in matters of love, when comparisons are appealed to.

Hitherto Grace had visited but little, but now she had entered the magic ring of society there was no end to the demands made upon her, and no circle was deemed complete unless enlivened by her presence. Whenever invited, she went if possible, and none but herself knew the motive which lay in her mind, which was the main-spring to all her actions. Learning the world quickly by reason of her keen sympathies and perceptions, she threw herself freely into the social scale, and with right principles as her guide, she was untrammelled by any of the glaring defects, which shine for awhile only to leave a blasted and worthless character behind.

Her experiences had learned her the value of caution

and prudence in her estimation of character, and also commended a spirit of inquiry, which, I am sorry to say, is not more in vogue at the present time. To hear reports from others as to one's character is not at all satisfactory, especially when they come from one's personal friends, who are more or less interested. How often it is enjoined, "Know thyself," but next to this, and at times more important, is the maxim, "Know others." How often do we see the value of the latter maxim, when a young couple but lately married, and married, alas, too soon, open their eyes before the honeymoon is over to the glaring defects of character and principle, and the curse of some bad habit, which bids fair to make a wreck of love's holy temple.

On the other hand, how often in the world true lovers are separated by some trivial thing, and pass by each other on opposite sides of life, whom perchance a spirit of inquiry would have united in love's golden bonds.

How sweet is love! How pure and ennobling in its influence when united to a worthy object. In love is all that there is of happiness and heaven below. We speak sometimes of a brighter world, where love is all in all, but as we stand by the silent shore of the river of death, its green fields and smiling valleys greet not our view. All is dark, and drear, and desolate. Enjoy, then, in this world, the happiness of true love while you may, for aught we know, it is the highest and only perfect happiness mortal will ever enjoy.

From occasional meetings at parties and levees, and friendly visits of the three families, Grace and the two

young men became quite intimate friends. Often in her walks and rides she was accompanied by one or the other, and sometimes by both. Between them, in reality, a rivalry existed as to which one should show her the most attention. Without being particularly inclined to either, Grace was pleased with their acquaintance and society. The parents of the young people watched the manœuvres with intense and absorbing interest, and, after some time had elapsed, apparently to no purpose, questioned within themselves whether some manœuvring of their own would not accomplish the desired result.

Mrs. Ford, who was particularly desirous that her son should make a good match, viewed with remarkable complacency the intimate terms on which he stood with Grace. Determined, however, to know the exact state of the case, she had a private interview with her son that evening, to ascertain his feelings on so important a subject. Being naturally of a scheming nature, Mrs. Ford thought she saw an admirable field for the display of her peculiar strategy. If possible she would lift the veil of destiny, forgetful of the fact that no human hand had ever touched it.

"Well, Francis, how do you progress in your suit?" inquired his mother.

"What suit do you mean, mother; my last suit of clothes?"

"No, no, Francis, I don't mean any such thing. Now laugh! How silly you are! You know what I mean, well enough. I mean your suit with Grace Lee; and you deserve to lose her for pretending not to know what I meant when I first spoke."



"Oh, that's what you meant, mother, is it? As to how I progress there, I cannot say whether I do or not, or whether the prospect is encouraging. I shall probably ask Grace one of these days, and then I shall find out. I admit I have some interest in the young lady, but whether I am likely to get the principal I can't say, and only think, mother, such a principal, — enough to set a young man both up and down in the world at the same time. I should just as lives take the young lady without the principal, for the interest itself is worth having."

"Then she has not given you any encouragement, Francis?"

"Not that I know of, mother. There is poor Carleton, too. He is in the same fix. I'll bet his tender heart is almost ready to break;" and here, as if pleased with what he had said, or amused at something else he was thinking of, the young man burst out in an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

With Mrs. Ford this was treating the subject too lightly; while, under his mirth, she saw what he had before intimated, that he had received no especial encouragement from Grace.

"Well, I declare, Francis, I should think you were beside yourself."

"Well, it's best to keep in good spirits, isn't it? For I don't know as Grace Lee cares so very much about me," replied Francis.

"Don't despair, Francis, you know what faint heart never won."

"My heart's already too faint now, mother. Give me your cologne bottle, quick!"

At this witticism, which seemed to cap the rest, Francis was lost again in irrepressible mirth, during which his mother sat patiently looking at him in surprise and suppressed vexation.

"Well, Francis, if that's the way you treat the subject, you ought to fail. I did not propose to tease or cajole you, but to coöperate with you, if possible, and I have some little plans to propose to you."

"Have you, mother? Indeed, then, I will be awful good and serious."

Setting their chairs near together, as if suspecting some third person, the plotters, mother and son, planned various manœuvres.

"In the first place, Francis, you are sure she shows no particular regard for Carleton."

"I am sure she has not, mother, as far as my personal observation goes. I know not, though, what may have passed between them during my absence."

"Then, Francis, you must not let Carleton get the upper hand of you in this respect. Sometimes a woman's heart is lost in a single visit. Ofttimes a particular word, or smile, or expression, will win her."

"True, mother, it does not take very much to win some women. Grace Lee, though, isn't won in any such light-fingered way as that now, I assure you. In respect to Carleton though, I will haunt him to the last, even if we go halves together on a pair of mittens. I really wish I could get rid of him, though. I think the

sooner he begins to forget Grace Lee, the better for me, and for him too."

"Perhaps by your haunting and watching him, Francis, you may tire him out of the notion."

"To do it, though, mother, requires great caution on my part. Besides, Carleton is not bluffed off so easy."

"You must not have him suspect you, and if he does, you must accuse him of the same thing, Francis."

"I wonder if Lucy couldn't help us, mother, in our grand strategy."

"Well, Francis, that she might. She's quite a pretty girl, and she might somewhat occupy Carleton's time and attentions."

As Lucy Ford was considered one of the prettiest girls, next to Grace Lee, the plan seemed both proper and practical. Moreover, as she, together with Grace and Carleton, were warm friends, it seemed promising of success.

What if her son should marry Grace Lee, and her daughter Lucy marry Carleton, thought Mrs. Ford, happily to herself. How fortunate if, in thinking of her son's welfare, she should thereby stumble on the means of securing her daughter's happiness, and thus link four destinies together by the golden bonds of love.

This was only a happy thought, however, and happy thoughts are not always true and genuine. There are a good many counterfeits in circulation in the world, of happy thoughts, which, at the bank counter of true happiness, are not redeemable. Manage and manœuvre as we may, if Destiny says No, and shakes its head, it **will**

not be, in spite of all our efforts to the contrary; for Destiny tells no lies to erring, mistaken mortals.

Calling Lucy Ford into the room, a third very necessary party was added to the love plotters. Between them the whole plan of operations was agreed upon. Some, perhaps, would think Lucy would refuse to play her part, but, having something herself at stake on the issue, she of course considered her own interest in the case and consented.

From time to time the Fords were to report to each other their progress, making such changes in the programme as were demanded.

That very night, as Guy Carleton sat in his easy-chair, indulging in a cosy reverie, with his feet up on the window-seat, in a respectful attitude to the moon and stars which shone so brightly, a pleasant idea entered his mind. Oh, if he could only be the possessor of Grace Lee's affections, he would be one of the richest and happiest men in the world! But there was Francis Ford, whom he knew possessed the same humble ambition. As it was now, Grace seemed to be a pleasant dead weight between the two rivals, or, in other words, as unchangeable as the principle of gravitation, in spite of centrifugal and centripetal forces. Very often Grace had said to him, "What a kind friend you are, Mr. Carleton," and sometimes he had fancied there was a hidden depth of meaning to it, but he remembered that often lovers go to the well of love, but instead of drawing up water, they draw up only air and an empty bucket.

Now Carleton had a cousin named Mary Lynne, who was an heiress, and the reputed belle of a neighboring me-

ropolis. The next morning she was expected to arrive on a visit, and as she had important business to transact, requiring considerable time, it was expected she would stay for several months; and, snatching on so favorable an opportunity, he resolved to make her an ally to his cause. If he could only get her and Francis Ford together, and have them interested in each other, he would have no doubt then of a favorable termination to his suit with Grace. For her he would be perfectly willing to exchange his fair cousin Mary. A fortunate opening seemed to occur for such a set of tactics, inasmuch as the Carletons were to have a brilliant party the next evening, to which his cousin had been specially invited. One idea was forced upon Carleton, and that was to rid himself of Ford in some way or other, cost what it would, and he brought his clenched fist down with such force as almost to break the ten commandments, which lay in the form of an open book on the marble-topped table. Not that he meditated as yet any violence, but the thought or possibility of losing Grace Lee, he could not calmly entertain for a moment. What made him and Ford equally earnest in their schemes, was the reminder, that Grace so far had given neither no decided encouragement, and each, by striving to outdo, and if possible pass the other, naturally supposed he would then have the advantage, and turning the tide of rivalry, gain the prize. Neither, however, considered for a moment Grace or her feelings, for of all people lovers are the most sanguine of success, even though the principalities and powers of fate stand dark and impassable between them and the goal.

## CHAPTER XIV.

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An early comer like a full blown rose in the morning.

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THE next morning a carriage came swiftly up the street to the door of the Carletons, and duly landed its occupant, fair cousin Mary Lynne. Coming so early as she did, she found only the servants ready to receive her, the family not having had as yet their morning resurrection. Mary Lynne was a lively, hearty young lady of eighteen summers, of medium height, and moreover she had a florid complexion, with a clear eye and a full round face, whose rosy cheeks gave her an expression of freshness and vigor which is charming and beautiful to behold.

The passer-by, who happened to be a young gentleman, looked upon her, as she jumped full of life and buoyancy from the steps of the carriage to the sidewalk, much in the same light as one who, travelling through desert wastes, comes all of a sudden upon a beautiful garden with but one ruddy rose in it.

Few indeed are the fresh ruddy roses that bloom in the garden of life, while many, alas, are the pale drooping lilies !

Nor wonder, my reader, when I tell you that that same passer-by was Francis Ford, who happened just then to be passing Carleton's house on his morning's walk.

On seeing the young lady alight, he was at once charmed by her appearance. In her manner and voice, as she spoke to the hack-man and servant, there was something that pleased him at first sight, and he had not gone far from Carleton's house, before he found himself instituting in his mind various and interesting comparisons between her and Grace. Next to his sister Lucy, and Grace Lee in particular, he thought her the prettiest girl he had ever seen, and he naturally entertained much curiosity and many speculations concerning her and the object of her visit.

It however appeared plain to him that she must be some relative of Carleton's, and just that moment, as he thought of their party the coming evening, he felt fully assured of it. As he waited and watched the carriage which went away empty, he was convinced she was one of the invited guests. Could he have looked into her two large travelling trunks, and the big valise which made up her baggage, and which were landed in the front entry, he would, by viewing her extensive dry goods treasures, and her costly dresses and fine things of wear, been fully confirmed in his honest convictions.

I hope she will stay long, and occupy Carleton's time and attentions as much as possible, and then I shall have so much better chance with Grace, thought Ford to himself, as he sauntered down the street. Could he, though,

have looked into Grace Lee's heart, he would have entertained far different theories.

In the afternoon Carleton and his Cousin Mary went out to ride, during which a lively conversation ensued.

"How do you get along love-making, Guy?" inquired his cousin.

"Making what, did you say, cousin?"

"Why, love-making, Guy, as I see you are not married yet. How does that match get along? Tell me all the particulars."

"Ah, that's what you want to know, is it, cousin? You young ladies are always so interested in love matters. There's nothing in the world you like better than to see a young fellow get himself into a fix, while you help him along deeper in. But there are so many pretty girls, now-a-days, cousin, judging from yourself, that a young man has but little choice. Where there are many it is difficult to select, and very doubtful, even after a selection is made. In fact, it is hard making love, honey, when there's so many bees in Cupid's hive. Seems to me, fair cousin, you are not troubled in your love matters at all."

"Not at all, Guy." When a woman has no love matters of her own, she very naturally looks after those of others. In looking after the gallants of other hearts, she very often secures one for herself."

"Well spoken, cousin, but you don't say you've lived these eighteen years, and not seen any one whom you love."

"Eighteen years, Guy! my sake, that's not very long. I've plenty of time yet. You need not think I am an old



maid at that age. If 'twas not for the old maids, I don't know what the old bachelors would do."

"Ha, ha! cousin. I shall have to introduce you to some to-night. There are plenty of them and to spare. They are rather young, though, of their age."

"Well, bring them along, Guy."

"Well, cousin, I think you can assist me very much in my love matters if you will, as you seem to be so interested in them."

"I should certainly be glad, Guy, to be of service to you in any thing which is proper and consistent."

"There is nothing improper about it at all, cousin; it is as pure and precious a little bit of strategy as you ever heard of. The facts in the case are these. I have been intimately acquainted with Grace Lee, whom I sincerely love, for nearly a year; but opposed to me is my rival, another young man, who, for aught I know, is as worthy of her as I am. He has been intimate with her about the same time. In other words, I am convinced that he is my only rival for her hand and heart."

"Yes, I have heard of Miss Grace Lee, I believe, Guy."

"She is as lovely as yourself, dear cousin, and the possessor of great wealth, both in mind and income."

"Has she given you, Guy, any special encouragement over him?"

"None at all, that I can perceive, cousin. I should infer that she is not given to partiality. True, she has many who are her friends, but what I mean, cousin, we two of all others seem to be her special favorites."

"Perhaps, Guy, it is because you two of all others are

so earnest in your attentions to her. Here you must bear in mind three things : first, a woman's love is not to be won or calculated upon by her reception of the attentions paid her ; second, where a woman receives the attentions of two rival lovers, she is not won by either, as long as those continue to be equally acceptable ; and third, if one or the other lover is not driven or drawn away from the field, both are apt to lose their suits, and some third lover, taking advantage of them, steps in boldly and carries off the prize. Have either of you made her any proposals, Guy ? ”

“ I have not, cousin, and I believe he has not, as far as I can learn. All I know is, that my visits and attentions to her seem equally acceptable as his, which is poor encouragement.”

“ Then you are both on a par with her, Guy.”

“ Exactly so, cousin ; we neither one of us command any premium as yet.”

“ Then, Guy, if I understand, you would like to get rid of him. With a free field you would stand a better chance.”

“ That is just the locality, cousin, where I desire your coöperation. I would have you as much as possible take up his leisure time, and also some of his spare affections if you can. If you can only get the slightest hold on his heart, you will help me considerable ; and bear in mind, cousin, he is as nice and respectable a young man as you would desire ; and who knows but what he and you may fall in love with each other. Ha, ha ! what do you say to that, cousin ? He will be at our party to-night, and I

will introduce you to him. Very likely Grace Lee will be present also, and then, cousin, we shall have two rival belles. You will discover, cousin, who the young man is I refer to almost without the aid of an introduction."

"I suppose he has a superior agreeability about him, Guy."

"Yes, a good deal, cousin, and he is withal very good-looking, another mark by which you can tell him."

"I declare, Guy, I feel greatly interested in him already."

"Even if you should not be interested in him particularly, cousin, you can assist me all the same."

"Certainly, Guy, all I can do consistently, I will."

"Thank you, cousin, you are my best friend. If I fail in my suit, it will be a consolation to know that you helped me to succeed."

Thus in lively conversation, the two counter-plotters rode homeward. Guy, though, for good reasons, bit his lips in vexation, as he caught a distant glimpse of Grace Lee taking, or rather concluding her afternoon walk, with Francis Ford beside her.

"One chance lost, but I will be even with him to-night," thought Guy Carleton to himself.

Soon the favored hour of the love-plotters grew near.

The drawing-room of the Carletons dazzled with beauty and splendor, but the star that all eyes expected to gaze upon was missing from its accustomed sphere. Owing to circumstances, and her own feelings, Grace Lee was not there, and fair Cousin Mary Lynne reigned in her stead. When the absence of Grace was fully con-

firmed, there were many significant glances passed between Mrs. Ford and her daughter Lucy, and Carleton and his cousin. This, they thought to a certainty, augured well for the opening of the drama which was in a few months to be enacted. What made it most agreeable was, that they had not counted on the happening of such a circumstance in their favor. Considerable surprise and speculation was felt on the subject, and more especially by Ford, who, on parting with Grace that afternoon, had received no intimation of her absence. In the new belle, however, Ford recognized the very young lady whom he had seen alight that morning at Carleton's door, and her society considerably relieved him from the disappointment of not seeing Grace, and with woman's ready tact, she threw boldly for the stake.

If, in looking after the happiness of Carleton, she could secure her own, so much the better. Her first impressions of Ford were favorable, and no wonder was it to her that Carleton should regard him as a dangerous rival in his suit. On the other hand, Ford's seeing her that morning, and the interest since then he had felt in regard to her, had awakened feelings in his breast, the existence of which he had little suspected. Could it be possible that in his own heart two rival loves should struggle for the mastery? Miss Lynne's apparent interest in him, and her untiring exertions to please him and retain him by her side, were, for the time being, ample recompenses for the loss of Grace's society, while Carleton watched with satisfaction the thus far favorable working of his plans. Though Mary Lynne had many admirers, there were

others who attracted a large share of attention, foremost among whom was Lucy Ford, who, in fact, believed in the theory, that when a young lady wishes to appear well for special reasons, she generally succeeds. To the strict observer, however, something more significant could be detected in her manner, which in itself contained somewhat of anxiety and expectation, quivering on the balance of some all-powerful and secret motive. Two courses of action were open to Lucy Ford at this time, — one the more retired, the other bold and open. Not often, however, does the rough, bold road, lead to the bowers of love. Most always the retired foot-path and the secret way lead to that heavenly place.

Without showing a very particular desire to attract Carleton's attentions, Lucy Ford remained awhile retired, as if biding her time. She remained not long thus, for Carleton, noticing her, came across the room, and seated himself beside her, and was soon engaged in lively conversation. This Carleton indulged in, more for the purpose of fixing Ford's attentions on his new acquaintance, than of fixing his own. As things went working well thus far, the love schemers on each side felt highly flattered at the success of their manœuvres, while they were totally ignorant of the desires and intentions of each other.

Hand in hand, henceforth, plot and counterplot are to work out the several destinies from the web and woof of life.

## CHAPTER XV.

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Through many plots and divers plans,  
See how love seeks its game!

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THE next day was all excitement and bustle in the good city of B——. One of the greatest singers of modern times was to give her first and opening concert.

That day a consultation was held by the Lees as to who Grace should attend the concert with, in anticipation of the many invitations she would receive, and the effect they might have on her future prospects.

"Well, Grace," inquired her father, wishing to ascertain her feelings on the subject, "who do you expect to go with to the concert to-night?"

"I hardly know, father. You ask me too much now. I shall have a big cloud full of invitations, most likely. If I should accept all of them, I might guarantee that the house would not be inconveniently crowded," replied Grace. "What do you think, mother?"

"Your proposition is rather a novel one I must confess, Grace."

"Only think, mother, what a strong body-guard I might have of beaux *en masse*. I might take Richmond."

Grace here gave way to some of her peculiar trumpet

peals of laughter, which were as sure to follow her witticisms as the thunder-peals follow the lightning flash.

The conversation, though, was soon resumed in a more sober manner, and with a more definite result.

With a large number of minds the consideration of most subjects and events begin, at first, in a humorous and merry manner, to be soon succeeded by thoughtful and serious reflection. Often the light torch of jest and merriment, carried by a careless hand, lights the way to the profound depths of knowledge and reality. How much better it is to look on the bright side of things first, and with the torch there obtained, light our way cheerfully through the dark side. If it were not for the bright side and the silver lining, the way of the traveller through this world would be dark and cheerless, and unlit by so much as a single star of heaven. To lose the physical sight of the fair world, that blooms like a rolling garden in space, is a bitter sorrow ; but one who is blinded mentally, feels a darkness which pierces the soul like a thousand daggers.

There are two kinds of travellers in this world, — one wrapt in the winter cloak of the dark side, whom the cold, howling winds follow and beat, making him bind the black garment, like a night blanket, closer around his bleak, desolate soul, — the other walks serenely onward, clothed in the garments of brightness and joy, and keeping time with his footsteps to the music of heaven and the glad marches of the angels. The tears and sorrows of the one flow to the dark ocean and are lost ; those of the other ripple, along green hills and laughing valleys, into joyous rivers and well-springs of delight.

Of the latter class was Grace Lee. She was no despairer, or love-sick maiden, pining for her almost ideal hero. On the contrary, she was sanguine almost to certainty. Her course, therefore, in life and society, she was obliged to shape accordingly. It was more in reference to the concert that evening, and the effect it might have, that she was absent from the party the night before. In anticipation of the many invitations she might receive, she wished rather to avoid them altogether, and thereby adopt the safe course of neither, accepting or declining them, and in this she was undoubtedly right.

"But you have not told us, Grace, who you were going with," said Mrs. Lee, resuming the conversation.

"I have received no invitations as yet, at all, and for fear I should not, I think I will go as one of the family."

"That is why we wish to know, Grace, so as to get the tickets."

"You will be on the safe side, then, Grace."

"I think so too, mother. You can get a ticket for me with the rest."

As Grace was away most of the afternoon, and was not expected home until just before the concert, the consequence was that many disappointed ones were in despair. Love's temple for them had crumbled in an instant, and there was no idol within it. Not one among them but supposed they had a perfect right to command the time and attentions of Grace Lee.

The Fords and Carletons were especially exercised upon the subject. However much they were surprised at Grace's absence the night before at the party, they were



more surprised at her conduct now. The result was, two important family councils.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing, Lucy?" inquired Mrs. Ford of her daughter. "Why! she will make herself actually unpopular and ugly at this rate."

"I am sure, mother, it is rather singular in Grace Lee, to say the least. I always make it a point to stay at home when any such things are on the tapis," replied Lucy.

"Certainly, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Ford, "that is the way any young lady should do under the circumstances, if she ever wishes to do well in the matrimonial market. Perhaps, though, Miss Grace Lee presumes on her great wealth and beauty. She, without doubt, can see a train of suitors a mile long or more."

"A magnificent prospect, really, mother. Perhaps, though, Grace Lee has a previous engagement with some one else. If it would do any good, I might call on her and endeavor to get some crumb of consolation for poor Francis."

"That will be of no use, Lucy, as Grace will not be at home till night. But here comes Francis now."

"Well, mother," remarked Francis, on entering, endeavoring to smooth over his vexation by a show of coolness, "I shall probably go with somebody else, if not with her. Somebody who will be glad to go too. Carleton and some few others are in the same fix. Suppose, Lucy, you make a call at Carleton's this afternoon; he must have some one go with him to take up his extra ticket. I know he will not go alone, neither will I, for all the Grace Lees in the world; and I am thankful there is only one.

If all the young ladies were Grace Lees, I don't know what the young men would do."

"Their hearts would be on the lees, and they would have to be saved by grace. Isn't it so, Francis?" said his sister.

"I can't say about that, Lucy," replied her brother, "It is very hard telling where some hearts are in this world. Some sail the deep like invisible ships, with no white sail in the distance to tell their whereabouts."

"Why, really, Francis, you are getting nautically romantic all at once," quietly remarked his sister.

"Well, perhaps I am, Lucy," replied Francis, "but to make a comparison more a matter of fact, I am like an empty vessel returning homewards with no freight, or to make a comparison most romantic, I am like an unemployed tug-boat."

"Ha, ha, ha! Francis, I wonder what next you will compare yourself with."

"Then, Lucy, you are pleased at that figure of speech which I have conjured up for your express gratification."

"I don't see the point, exactly, Francis."

"What! of the comparison, Lucy? Well, I will tell you. A young man is nothing more than a tug-boat to tow the young ladies around town to concerts, operas, and such things, when they feel like going. Do you see it now?"

"How perfect the comparison, Francis, isn't it? You seem to take it wonderfully patient, though."

"Patient — Lucy — of course I am patient, for I am a near relation of Job, and of the same family, and more

than that, I am patient on a good many things he never was patient on."

"Well, Francis, if that's the case, I will risk you for some time yet. Why don't you call on the young lady you danced with so many times last evening; she would make an agreeable companion for you."

"Carleton will probably go with her, Lucy, if he does not go with Grace."

Here a sigh almost escaped Francis Ford, as if he feared his rival was on the point of being successful. To see him that evening carry off the palm victoriously, and flaunt his success before the eyes of all, would be more than he could bear. It was finally decreed by the Fords, that Lucy should call at Carleton's and reconnoitre.

About four o'clock that afternoon, Carleton called at Grace's, and was returning home unsuccessful in his mission, when he discovered Lucy Ford coming up the street.

"Just the young lady I want to see," said Carleton to himself; "I don't care if I do snub Grace Lee, not a bit."

"Well, Miss Ford, I suppose you are going to the concert to-night," remarked Carleton, after his salutation to her.

"Well, Mr. Carleton, I cannot say," replied Lucy, "I have not received any invitations as yet."

"Well, Miss Ford, I would really like to have you go with our folks this evening. I would really like the pleasure of your company. If I do not go with my cousin,

Miss Ford, I will call for you at seven. Does this meet your approbation?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carleton, I am very happy to accept your proposal. I will wait for you till seven, and if you do not come, I can then go with some other friends who have invited me."

Leaving matters thus, they separated, each rejoicing in the natural working of their strategy. With Carleton and his cousin it was already arranged. Taking a round-about way home, Lucy Ford reported the state of affairs at domestic head-quarters.

Somewhat astonished at their success, it was agreed, that in order to enable Carleton to wait upon Lucy, it was incumbent upon Francis to wait on Miss Mary Lynne, and thus relieving Carleton, put him perfectly at ease to make his engagement with Lucy unconditional. As Francis Ford was satisfied in his mind respecting the position of Grace and Carleton, he gladly accepted the arrangement, and as things worked to their expectations, Miss Lynne joyfully accepted Francis Ford as her escort, and the two counterplots succeeded.

Great was the surprise of all, however, when Grace appeared at the concert with the family, without any other escort. Immediately on taking her seat, a score or more of opera glasses were levelled at the fair occupant, succeeded by a general buzz of comment and admiration. Many were the hearts that sighed the refrain of the past, and to have occupied the seat beside her would have seemed to them like a promising token of a happy here-

after. Could it be possible that Grace Lee's heart was yet untouched by even love's lightest zephyrs?

Oh, how sweet the calm serenity of a heart which is all its own! Over it no rude breath of passion or tempest passes, while, like an angel's wings, its unruffled sails waft it gently onward!

To many it was conclusive that Grace Lee had not as yet chosen, and that her lover was far away. Often what a distance in time separates those who at times are near together in space. Hand may clasp hand ever so closely, long before the band that binds heart to heart is forged from the anvil of Destiny.

With Grace, though, it was the reverse. Eagerly did she peer round the concert hall, but the form and face which she sought were not there. She had come hopefully that evening, and with a prayer in her heart that she might see him, but still he was among the missing. What to her were the smiles of friends and the nods of recognition, compared with one look of the living and breathing likeness of her heart's idol? As she looked backward on the past, so full of hope, without any apparent success in attaining her object, it seemed as if despair would almost seize upon her. Sometimes she would imagine him as wedded to another, and then it seemed to her as utter folly to think of him longer. Then would arise the question, whether there was no other one for her to love and treasure. Of others she certainly thought, among whom were both Ford and Carleton, but she could not persuade herself yet to resign her unknown hero who seemed to hold her heart spell-bound, as if by a

magic charm. No — she would not give him up yet, — she would still trust in Providence and the future.

As Carleton and Ford glanced at Grace, and then at each other, something seemed to whisper to them the secret which was in Grace's heart. They could only speculate, however, in regard to her, and besides it was nothing uncommon that a young lady should sometimes go with her parents. By the course which Grace pursued, she took care to give no offence, nor to occasion any just ground of complaint, so that neither Carleton or Ford could reasonably believe that she had ever intended to avoid them.

Perchance they thought there was some third rival. If so, he had not as yet appeared. Meanwhile Mary Lynne was improving the opportunity she had aided in bringing about, and by every art and winning way she sought to divert Ford's attention, while she steadily fumbled after his affections ; while Ford probably never suspected he had such a fair thief beside him.

At times, however, Miss Lynne would find Ford with his gaze perfectly absorbed on Grace Lee. Being a witty and lively conversationist, she made the time pass pleasantly with Ford, who, as he now and then glanced over to where Carleton and his sister Lucy sat, felt after all a peculiar kind of ease and resignation ; and probably Carleton felt the same, while, with regard to Grace, they were both evidently nonplussed.

To make his plot more perfect, however, Carleton resolved to make Grace and his cousin acquainted with

each other ; for a direct line of communication with Grace would be most fitting and opportune.

Carleton, therefore, arranged it, as fate would have it, so that on coming out of the hall, they met together, when a formal introduction, which could not be avoided, took place, ending, as Carleton desired, in an invitation from Grace to fair Cousin Mary to call and see her.

## CHAPTER XVI.

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Come let's sit down, and we will have  
A pleasant chat together, and talk  
The time away.

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THE invitation of Grace to Miss Lynne was fully accepted on the following day. With that sincerity and frankness which most of all distinguished Grace, she received her visitor. In beauty they were rivals, but not so in love. To the eye of a painter or poet the scene would have been the meeting of beauty with beauty. How often in this world beauty dwells alone, seldom associating with any other beauty. It may be though in the future that the court of beauty will be held, and the picture of it, painted by some master hand, delight all coming ages.

The object of Miss Lynne was not simply to make a visit. Far other than that. To ascertain the reason of Grace's late conduct, was her principal motive. Carleton indeed, planned wisely when he joined Grace and his cousin together in the bond of friendship. He reasoned well, in that it takes a woman to fathom a woman, with what success we shall see in due time. It must be confessed, however, that some women are unfathomable.

The interview between Grace and Miss Lynne was



withal very gratifying and pleasant. There was nothing that Grace Lee in common with her sex enjoyed more highly, than an agreeable chit-chat and rambling gossip on various subjects. In fact, in the field of mind, gossip and conversation are the light batteries of artillery. To converse well, though, is rather a rare talent. All, though, cannot belong to the light artillery.

There must be heavy siege guns of reason and logic, and also the common-place infantry, as well as the slow-plodding sappers and miners. How often we listen to conversation which approaches more to the ridiculous than the sublime. To be truly agreeable and entertaining, conversation must contain within itself the elements of sound sense and originality. A good saying, — a noble thought, — is immortal in the eyes of the world. Ages yet unborn shall transmit the great sayings of the mind's peers to the dead ages sleeping in the grave of the far future, which wait silently in their turn for the sound of the resurrection trump of the present.

"I am indeed happy to meet you," said Grace, as she advanced to receive Miss Lynne with open hand and smiling countenance.

"Not more so than myself, I assure you, Miss Lee," replied Miss Lynne. "I expected to have seen you at our party the other evening."

"I have been to all of them but that one, Miss Lynne, and I had some reasons for not attending it."

"Because it was the last one, I suppose you thought you would not go, Miss Lee; but every one missed you very much, especially the young men."

"Indeed, Miss Lynne, you actually surprise me. I trust, though, you enjoyed yourself on that occasion."

"Oh, very much, Miss Lee, I assure you. A good social gathering is a healthy institution. Don't you think so, Miss Lee?"

"Exactly, Miss Lynne, I agree with you there. I should have probably enjoyed it. I believe in what we young people call a good time."

"You don't know who were there, Miss Lee."

"What! strangers do you mean?"

"Yes, Miss Lee, — ladies and gentlemen, — myself among the number."

"Americans or foreigners, Miss Lynne?"

"I think both, Miss Lee. One of them in particular, a foreigner, danced very finely. They called him count or marquis somebody; I could not make out which."

"I'll warrant it, Miss Lynne; I'm really glad I was not there."

"Why, Miss Lee, on his account?"

"No, Miss Lynne, not for that, certainly. For aught I know, he might be a very agreeable personage of some fifty years of age."

"Oh, not so old as that, Miss Lee; he's not over forty, I believe."

"A most charming age, assuredly, Miss Lynne, for romantic young ladies."

"Any way, Miss Lee, the young ladies were much taken up with him."

"What, so taking as that, Miss Lynne! he must be

quite a hero of an hour or two in such times as these. I am almost sorry I was not there, now."

In this lively and playful manner the conversation was carried on. Miss Lynne saw she could obtain no clue to the secret of Grace's absence from the Carleton levee; and so she had turned the conversation into a side channel, to stumble upon and discover it if possible. She had therefore introduced the foreigner as a feint to put Grace, if possible, off her guard.

"But how did you like the concert, Miss Lynne, last evening?" inquired Grace, thus changing the theme.

"Oh, I admired it very much, Miss Lee."

"You had an agreeable escort in Mr. Ford, Miss Lynne."

"Oh very, Miss Lee, and withal quite a nice young man, as we young ladies would say. Carleton takes quite a liking to his sister Lucy, I should think."

"You don't think so, Miss Lynne, from the fact of his being with Miss Ford at the concert. That is nothing; you might see him with many in the course of a month."

Mrs. Lee and Lizzie, at this juncture of the conversation, entered the room, and were duly introduced to the fair visitor, who was invited to stay to tea and spend the evening with them, which invitation was accepted.

To further her object, Miss Lynne had introduced both Ford and Carleton in the conversation which had just closed, to discover, if possible, any leaning of Grace's feelings to either.

After tea the family settled down into a comfortable

enjoyment of the evening. Soon, however, the door-bell rang, and Mr. Ford entered. "How fortunate that he should come," thought Miss Lynne to herself. "I shall have a chance of seeing them together."

"I was rather disappointed, Miss Lee, in not seeing you at our party the other evening," remarked Mr. Ford, as he shook hands with her.

"Indeed, Mr. Ford, it happened that I could not come, being otherwise engaged. You had quite a party I understand," replied Grace.

"Yes, Miss Lee, you should have been there to make it complete."

"You did not know, Mr. Ford, that I deputed Miss Lynne here to take my place?" laughingly inquired Grace.

"I was not sensible of it, at least, Miss Lee."

"Perhaps Miss Lynne is not, either, Mr. Ford. However, as she was there, I shall consider my place as very well filled, and am bound to give no excuses."

"In what a pleasant way she philosophizes, Miss Lynne, doesn't she?"

"If not for philosophy, Mr. Ford, you cannot imagine how wretched we young ladies would be," remarked Grace.

"There, there, Miss Lee, I appeal to Miss Lynne," replied Ford.

"Yes, Mr. Ford," replied Miss Lynne, "there is a certain kind of philosophy we young ladies like very much."

"Ah, Miss Lynne, you young ladies are a race of cunning and artful philosophers."

"A good opinion, Mr. Ford, ~~really~~. I did not imagine you could think so much of the fair sex as all that."

"Certainly, Miss Lynne; you do not suppose I could say much less than that. I am very modest in my estimate."

At this moment Mr. Lee entered the room in his good, hearty, and jovial manner. A few moments before he had cleared an odd twenty thousand dollars by a certain speculation, which fact probably accounted in a slight degree for his good spirits on this occasion.

"Well, Grace, who have we here?" inquired Mr. Lee, on entering the room, and resting his eye on Miss Lynne, whose beauty he instantly began to compare with that of his daughter.

"I am happy, father, to introduce you to Miss Lynne of New York," replied Grace.

"Good evening, Miss Lynne, I am happy in making your acquaintance. You are looking finely. I should think New England air rather agrees with you. I was thinking, when I entered, which looked the prettiest, — yourself, or my daughter, Grace."

"Well, what conclusion did you come to, father?"

"Oh, no conclusion at all. Besides, I do not wish to made either one of you jealous, you know," replied Mr. Lee, smiling.

"Well, how do you like what you have seen of New England so far, Miss Lynne?" inquired Mr. Lee.

"Oh, very much. It is of quite an agreeable character, in all respects," replied Miss Lynne.

Quite a conversation was carried on between Mr. Lee

and Miss Lynne, during which time Ford improved the opportunity in a lively and interesting chit-chat with Grace, which, in turn, was interrupted by Mr. Lee asking Mr. Ford if he would not like to take a hand at whist.

This request on the part of Mr. Lee rather cut against the grain of Ford, who, privately wishing the game of whist, together with Miss Lynne, was in some other locality, assented to the proposal, provided he could have Grace for a partner. Gladly would he have continued his *tête à tête* with Grace, had not circumstances and a desire to please her father prevented. Somewhat vexed in mind at the interruption, and the ill-timed visit of Miss Lynne, he took his seat at the table just as Mr. Lee, who dealt, had turned the ace of spades for trumps.

The scarcely-concealed dissatisfaction of Ford was silently noticed by both Grace and Miss Lynne, the latter chuckling in secret, and thankful to Mr. Lee for his intervention, which had separated all parties for the rest of the evening.

In this, though, Ford gained his object. He was to sit opposite to Grace. By no better method could he watch the workings of her countenance and her changes of expression. In this he deemed himself fortunate.

By the way, there may be many of my readers who look perhaps on cards as a species of gambling. But it is not so. There are many gamblers who would have been better off, if, abandoning their evil companions, they had sometimes indulged in the innocent and useful amusement which cards afford. There are many who deny their children this, because they are afraid they will grow

up to be gamblers. There is no greater error. A large majority of professed gamblers, I will venture to say, never played cards in their younger years, and they follow gambling as a profession, to obtain their living, in preference to any more worthy occupation ; and it cannot be denied that gamblers must live as well as anybody else.

To indulge at times in whist, euchre, and other games which cards represent, is true and healthful pleasure for the mind, affording wide scope for free, social enjoyment, and the merry flash of fancy and wit. To throw the curse of gambling on an innocent pack of cards, which were originally designed for social enjoyment, is as ridiculous as it is unwise ; for gambling existed long before cards were invented ; and gambling now-a-days is carried on more extensively by other means.

Instances often occur where men gamble with houses and lands, and even with their sacred honor.

Gambling itself is a passion which has existed in the human mind for centuries. It is part of the legacy which was bequeathed to the human race from the apple Eve ate in the garden. Moreover, it is unaided by any of outward things, for mind takes no permanent influence or impression from things of matter. It is the use which man puts them to, and there alone is determined their good or evil.

For instance, the same knife that prunes the grape-vine or trims the fruit-tree, may take the life of a human being. Are knives then to be cast out entirely because they have by man been put to a murderous use ? Are houses and lands to be deemed accursed because they have been gam-

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bled with? Is language to be deemed an evil because there are bad words in it, and it is used in swearing? Are all the blessings and comforts in life to be branded as evil, because by some they have been turned into instruments for bad purposes? Assuredly not. Packs of playing cards have often saved lives as valuable as those saved by Bibles. Many a pious mother has thanked kind Heaven for the pack of cards which stood humble guard between her darling boy and death on the field of battle. But I refrain.

Reader, did you ever sit down of an evening by a comfortable home fireside, and indulge with those you love in a hand at whist, euchre, or forties? If not, you have missed as good enjoyment as ever the Creator intended for you. If a young man, and on a visit to your sweetheart, did you ever court at a game of whist or euchre? Yet it may be indulged in to a great extent.

The meeting of eye with eye, and the kindling of mutual glances into sweet smiles and sweeter expressions, have bound many hearts beautifully together which otherwise might have been left to suffer. Often the occasional meeting for social enjoyment, enhanced in value by some game at cards, have been the flying strings to some well-tied knot of love and happiness.

This pleasure in particular Mr. Ford experienced, as with quick fingers he took up his hand from the table, and commenced sorting it. Not a trump! he almost exclaimed aloud, as he looked at it. In two other suits he was strong, and these he worked to advantage. In the rubber game Grace and Ford were beaten. One thing very noticeable was, that neither Ford nor Miss Lynne had one



hand during the evening which was remarkably strong; therefore most of the playing was done by Grace and her father, their partners following suit.

Such is the luck of cards, and often such is the fate of life. The trumps of life are held by only a few. But a small number hold the strong cards. The less favored of mankind only play the weaker ones.

As Miss Lynne donned her things, preparatory to departure, she thought herself fortunate in having Ford for an escort homeward, while Ford himself, though somewhat pleased with her society, actually wished her a thousand leagues from shore, but he could not help thanking fortune that she was such a pretty, charming woman, and also an heiress. Moreover, if he should fail in his suit with Grace, he could not help thinking that Miss Lynne would make a good substitute.

If he could only place Carleton in the same circumstances with his sister Lucy, to act Miss Lynne's part, he would feel much gratified. To do this, however, required some preparation. It was necessary to know what evening Carleton next visited Grace, and to hold Lucy ready to take the opportunity. Some watching of Carleton's movements was therefore requisite.

For three successive evenings, therefore, did Ford watch at the door of fate for the appearance of his rival. He wondered that Carleton could keep away from Grace so long. It might be on Miss Lynne's account, though. On the third evening, he was very agreeably gratified in seeing the well-known form of Carleton come down the street, and turn up the well-known steps of the Lee man-

sion. Sacred steps these, thought Ford to himself. Soon the door was opened, and Carleton was alone with Grace.

Hurrying homeward, Ford soon set his sister Lucy on the track of his rival, and in due time a third party was added to the *tête à tête*.

"I only came in for a moment, Grace, to see if you had that pattern of crotchet you spoke of the other day," remarked Lucy Ford, by way of excuse.

"Do take your things off, Lucy, and not mind the pattern now."

"No, Grace, I only came in for a moment, after that."

"Why, Lucy, how obstinate you are. Just as if you could not spend an evening in pleasant company."

"But mother will be worried somewhat, Grace."

"There, Lucy Ford, just as if you had not staid out of an evening before without telling your mother of it. I can send servant Jarvis with a message to your mother, letting her know that you are out, and where you are, if you want me to."

As Lucy Ford, thus pressed by the entreaties of Grace, took off her bonnet and cloak, and consented to stay for the rest of the evening, Grace felt agreeably relieved, while Carleton, wishing Lucy Ford where before Ford had wished Miss Lynne, felt obliged to put up with the consolation which another hope deferred afforded.

He was extremely vexed with Lucy Ford for intruding on his visit; and more especially so with Grace, who had so earnestly pressed Lucy to remain, apparently against her own inclinations. However much displeased, he was

forced to put the best face on the matter, feeling that a golden opportunity had thus slipped away from him through the hands of a second party.

After his sister's departure, Ford queried to himself whether it would not be best to call at Grace's after her. In some way he felt that, after all, Carleton might suspect him. To remove this he thought best to go on an apparent search after Lucy, calling at Carleton's house first, where Miss Lynne invited him in.

"I was hunting for my sister Lucy, Miss Lynne. I did not know but she might be here. She went out somewhere, and I have been trying to find her."

"Come in, Mr. Ford! come in, and take your coat off. Never mind your sister Lucy. She is safe enough I'll warrant. I have been wishing for company all the evening; I have been so lonesome."

Not being able to resist the hearty invitation of Miss Lynne, who seemed to act as a check on his movements, he yielded, and was soon lost in her society for the rest of the evening. On departing home, however, he came across Carleton and Lucy, returning from Grace's, arm in arm, in the bewitching moonlight.

"Why really, Lucy, where have you been to? I have just come from Carleton's house, thinking you might be there," remarked Ford, affecting ignorance as to his sister's movements.

"Is that all the places you have been to after me, Francis?"

"Yes, I got there, and could not get any further. The

fact is, Miss Lynne detained me, assuring me you were safe enough, and in good company. A kind of magnetic influence was exerted upon me."

"Magnetic influence ! I guess as much, Francis."

Arriving at the door of Ford's house, the three love-plotters separated, by bidding each other the customary good evening.

Good-night ! to loving stars good-night,  
Good-night to heaven so bright and fair :  
Good-night to strains the spheres do bear,  
Which breathe to mortals fond good-night !

## CHAPTER XVII.

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I fear it, alas I fear it!

I feel as one rejected.

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ON Carleton's arriving home, the door was opened by his cousin, Miss Lynne, who was awaiting his return.

"The deuce take it!" muttered out Carleton, as he entered the sitting-room in considerable vexation, giving his hat a toss across the entry, and sending his cane in a rattling walk after it.

"What now, Carleton?" inquired his cousin, with a look of sober anxiety.

"Thwarted! thwarted! a golden opportunity lost, Mary," replied Carleton, and bringing his clenched fist down to the table, a sounding demonstration was made.

"What, Guy! she has not refused you?" inquired his cousin, as she brought up her chair near to Carleton, and put her white hand on his shoulder, as if to soothe and comfort him. Meanwhile, looking with expectant earnestness into his ruffled face, she awaited his answer.

"No, not that, cousin, I might have been very near it, perhaps."

"What then, Guy?"

"Why the fact is, cousin, I got up there, and Grace

was all alone. I was having a glorious *tête à tête* with her, which might have ended, I don't know in what, when the door-bell rung, and Lucy Ford came in, and the worst of it was, Grace insisted on her staying for the whole of the evening, and without asking my permission; think of that. Really I did wish then that there were no Fords in creation, and that they were a few thousand leagues off."

"Ah, the river of love is fordable, Guy," replied Miss Lynne, smiling.

"It's so unfortunate, cousin, when you are alone with a pretty girl, and mean to win her, that somebody must interfere. Pretty way to disturb a worthy young man's devotions!"

"What, Guy, were you going to declare yourself then and there?"

"Why, certainly, cousin, when the sky is fair, and the wind favors, and the sea invites, the laden ship is wooed and won to its bridegroom's glassy bosom."

"Beautiful comparison, Guy; but suppose you had been rejected. For some laden ships there exists no harbor on the opposite side of the ocean."

"Ah, there is the rub, cousin. If I should be rejected."

"Perhaps, Guy, Lucy arriving just as she did, saved you from the mortification of defeat and rejection."

"Perhaps, cousin, but who can tell? There's the uncertainty which must be fathomed."

"Maybe, Guy, you lose nothing by waiting. Different circumstances may develop themselves in your favor."

"Possibly, cousin, you are a good philosopher. You might argue me wholly out of my love for her."

"In case you were rejected, Guy, I should have to, evidently."

"I was almost on the brink of the precipice, cousin, when Lucy Ford came in."

"And saved you from tumbling over, Guy."

"A wholesome check, then, you think, cousin."

"It may be, Guy. In love you should not be hasty. You should not improve every opportunity that presents itself, neither should you deem all chances opportunities. Grace, probably anticipating some important movement on your part, and wishing to save you from disappointment, seized hold of Lucy Ford's visit, and threw it as an impediment in your way."

"Think so, cousin? If so, she is very kind."

"I really believe this to be the real interpretation of the case."

"For what reason, think you, would she do this, cousin?"

"Perhaps, Guy, for these reasons. First, she might be unprepared for any thing so important as a declaration, at that time. Second, perhaps she might not wish to lose your friendship, in deciding according to her present inclinations, which might be subject to many changes."

"Why, really, cousin, I believe you read Grace Lee like a book."

"No, not that, Carleton, I may interpret a person according to my best judgment, and the original meaning

be exactly opposite. It may be Grace Lee loves you, and wishes to try your patience."

"Well, cousin, she does try my patience and all my other virtues; as to that, I really despair sometimes, and begin to think she does not love me."

"Keep a good heart, Guy, and a sharp eye on your rival."

"As far as I know, cousin, Ford rests on the same footing, neither accepted nor rejected. But I wish it were really settled."

"In your favor, Guy, I suppose you mean. Don't be in a hurry, Guy, or you may commit suicide over it."

"Don't be alarmed on that score, cousin; I would not kill myself for the prettiest girl in the world, or for all of them put together."

"We must endeavor, Guy, to arrive at Grace's feelings, and inclinations."

"Well said, cousin, if you can do it. It is very difficult finding where some young ladies' affections or their hearts are."

"Another thing we must find out, Guy, and that is, what progress Ford has made with Grace."

"Yes, cousin, these two items discovered will greatly assist us; but one thing has puzzled me; and that is, in every attempt I have made to declare myself, she has either repelled or evaded me. She seems perfectly willing to let me stand off at a distance."

"Depend upon it, Guy, you have not yet won Grace Lee. As long as she is not utterly lost to you, she is as much yours as any one's to win."



Seeing that Carleton was in rather a desponding mood, his cousin endeavored to cheer him up in his love-suit, which really looked to her very uncertain, and forboding of misfortune.

Troubled in mind and heart, Carleton sought his couch, and soon over him rolled the calm soothing waves of the ocean of sleep.

The next morning, Miss Lynne revolved in her mind several methods for fathoming Grace, and ascertaining the true drift of her affections. To do this, she knew was no easy task, and one which might involve some subtle stratagem. To proceed boldly, and at once, toward the object, seemed impossible. To steal stealthily on the delicate ground, under cover of some skilful scheme, seemed the most promising. But what should the scheme be, and who should be the actor? It must be also a plot to set Ford, if possible, off the track. After thinking over several plans, Miss Lynne resolved that an anonymous letter should contain the scheme, and calling in Guy, she briefly unfolded her project to him, which met his approval.

“Here, cousin, here is a letter will do. It is written by a young lady friend of mine, who is to be married in a few weeks — lucky girl that she is — and fortunately the initials of her name will answer in this case, and there is plenty of room to fill in the whole name.”

“How fortunate, Carleton, you have this; and the writing looks very much like Grace Lee’s. But how shall it be placed so that Ford will get it and not suspect it?”

"Ah, there's the rub, cousin. There's no post-office for that letter I fear, nor no mail carrier. Give me the letter, and I will try and have it reach him in some way."

For three days Carleton watched the opportunity of delivering the letter, without attracting suspicion to himself, but without success; until at length Miss Lynne hit upon a method, and with this in view, she took the letter, and departed the next evening, just at dusk. Her plan was to fall in with Ford somewhere, without his seeing her. For several evenings she pursued her game without success. On the fifth evening, she stationed herself at some distance from his house, to be sure of being on his track when coming out. In this she was not disappointed.

After tea he made his appearance, on his way up to Grace's, to spend the evening. Following at some distance behind him, and holding the letter concealed in her hand, she proceeded behind him, until she came up to a boy who was going the same way. Throwing the letter in the gutter, she advanced a few paces, and calling the boy, went back with him to it, and requested him to run and deliver it to Mr. Ford, as it probably belonged to him. Seeing that he fulfilled his errand, she turned in the opposite direction, and was soon out of sight.

On delivering the letter to Mr. Ford, and being asked where he got it, the boy replied, that he picked it up from the gutter. Knowing it did not belong to him, but thinking it of some importance to somebody, he put it inside of his breast pocket, and continued on his way.

A charming evening he spent with Grace, and on retiring homewards, and to his room, he thought of the letter, and taking it out, and observing the seal was already broken, concluded it had passed its first reading, and therefore he opened it, and read as follows :

“MY DEAR SIR,— Please call and see me to-night, and I will give you a definite answer in regard to our engagement, and will agree upon a day in the future when our marriage will take place.

“Yours forever, in the bonds of love,

“GRACE LEE.”

Almost thunderstruck, as he read this, and noticed the signature, he at first doubted the genuineness of the document. Having seen, though, but little of Grace's handwriting, he felt incapable of judging. His sister Lucy would be most likely to know best on the subject, and, placing the letter before her the next morning, she examined it by some original letters of Grace, and pronounced it nearly genuine, as far as the writing went, but she did not feel quite certain of it.

“If not original, it is a very well-executed counterfeit, certainly, Francis,” remarked his sister, as she handed the letter back to him.

“Just what the bank folks would say of a counterfeit bill, Lucy. I've a good mind to send it to Carleton just as it is. He would very likely find out about it. How would it do, though, to go directly to Grace, and show it to her and ascertain the truth at once?”

"There may be some advantage in keeping it, and not saying a word about it, I think. You will be no better off in finding out the truth of it. Keep it as a secret, and it may work itself out," replied Lucy Ford.

"As for Grace being engaged, Lucy, I do not believe it, do you?"

"Hardly, Francis, we should have heard of it before now, if true."

"I should be the happiest man in the world, Lucy, if I knew that letter came from Grace directly to me. I wonder if Carleton has any such letters sent him."

"What letters were you speaking of, Francis?" inquired Mrs. Ford, who just then came into the room.

"Here, mother, look at this curious letter, and see if you can tell its authorship."

"Why, really, Lucy, you do not believe Grace Lee wrote that — do you, Francis?"

"No, mother, it may not be. If all of the world's wealth was counterfeit I would prize one of Grace Lee's own letters, written in just such words, above it all, provided I knew the letter was intended for me. What would you do with it any way? Carry it to Grace?"

"No, I would not do that, Francis, for Grace may mistrust something. I cannot see that it is very important to find out the truth of it yet. You will do better to discover the source from whence it came. You cannot be too careful in the matter, for much trouble has been occasioned by just such letters."

After further consultation to no purpose, the letter was safely deposited with the dead secrets of the past, from

which, Carleton and his cousin vainly awaited its reappearance.

This was a far different result from what Carleton had anticipated, and Miss Lynne found she had lost her somewhat curious sounding-line with which to ascertain Grace's affections and preference. For either of them to have mentioned, or even hinted any thing in regard to it, would have betrayed them ; hence they could say nothing. The only apparent effect resulting from it was, that Ford was more attentive to Grace Lee than ever, and as much a rival of Carleton's as of old.

"We must try something else," said Carleton to his cousin.

Oftentimes Carleton was tempted to make a downright declaration of his love to Grace, and thus end the matter ; but unless he could foresee a favorable answer to his suit, such a proceeding seemed impossible. Besides, circumstances had robbed him of the opportunity of so doing, while chance favored him still less. What would he not have given for one uninterrupted hour with Grace. What also would Grace not have given for a moment's time with him whose form and face were indelibly stamped on her memory and heart. Still the hours flew on, and her hero appeared not. "Will he never come?" was a question she asked often, but as yet no answer was vouchsafed.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

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I know it well, but yet I love them not,  
They are but friends along life's common lot:  
With him I love I cannot them compare,  
True love indeed is treasure far more rare.

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“WELL, Grace, who is it to be, Mrs. Carleton or Mrs. Ford?” quizzed her father, as he had just finished reading the paper, and settled down in his easy-chair for the rest of the evening.

Grace, who was busy just then on a splendid crochet pattern, looked up in some surprise at this question, — smiled and colored prettily, and dropping her face again, modestly said nothing, but continued on her work. She came very near asking her father, though, which of the two gentlemen named he should prefer.

“I will take them in detail,” thought Mr. Lee to himself. What do you think of Mr. Ford, Grace?”

“I think well of him so far, father. Is he a particular favorite of yours?”

“Why so, Grace?”

“I didn’t know but that he was, seeing you mentioned him first.”

“Not at all, Grace; but perhaps you like Carleton better.”

"Not particularly, father. It would be hard to tell which I prefer, on the score of friendship."

Now both young men were equally acceptable to Mr. Lee, and he could not see how Grace could refuse both of them. Having, though, experienced his share of woman's love, he did not urge the matter, knowing that Grace must decide. Meanwhile rumors had been circulated freely round by friends of both parties, that Grace was actually engaged to somebody, — now to Ford, and now to Carleton.

Here the door-bell rung, and Mrs. Lang entered to receive and dispense the usual salutations. More than this, Mrs. Lang had also come on special business of importance, as she inquired, with considerable earnestness of Grace, how she and her friend Carleton got along together.

"Oh, very well, Mrs. Lang; we are of course the best of friends," replied Grace.

"I think him a very fine young man, Grace," remarked Mrs. Lang, "and I hope it is true, Grace, that you are engaged to him."

"What! Engaged to him did you say, Mrs. Lang?"

What else Grace would have said was lost, as she burst into joyous laughter.

"When is it to be, Grace? Now own up. Between women you know there should be no secrets, especially of that kind."

"I will give you favorable notice, Mrs. Lang, and plenty of time to prepare for it. Will that be satisfactory?"

"Oh yes, Grace, certainly. In the event of your marrying Carleton, I can safely wish you all the happiness you can enjoy."

"Thank you, Mrs. Lang, for your kindly interest. I shall not forget it."

Now Mrs. Lang was a confidential agent of Mrs. Carleton's, and, unknown to any one else, it had been arranged between them that she should have an interview with Grace, as before described, and the result, to all appearances was so satisfactory, that Mrs. Lang, highly elated at the assuring conduct of Grace, hurried back to Mrs. Carleton, like the messenger dove to its owner, carrying the apparent good news.

That very evening, Ford had fallen in with Mrs. Lynne, who had invited him home with her, and he was enjoying a pleasant evening's delight with her, when the notes of a conversation in another room attracted his attention. The name of Grace, mentioned several times, he could distinctly hear. The conversation was mostly carried on in an undertone, as if the speakers were aware of the too near proximity of uninvited listeners. Now and then, though, some fragment of the conversation would float out, and one remark Ford could distinctly hear, the substance of which was, that Grace had admitted her engagement to Carleton.

Somewhat an unhappy man was Ford then, as with hurried step and excited mien, and pleading an urgent engagement elsewhere, he left Miss Lynne's lovely presence, who, after his departure, wondered long in mute surprise at his sudden exit.



Once out in the open air, it seemed to him as if he could breathe in the whole calm expanse of the peaceful sky above him, to soothe his troubled heart. Suddenly the truth flashed upon him, that he was now fully launched on the tossing ocean. His first impulse was to seek the presence of Grace, and know at once the whole truth. He feared, after all, that the contents of the letter so strangely received, might be too true. Feeling, however, that he was unfitted in mind for any thing so decisive as he first proposed, and thinking that Carleton might be there, he deferred his visit to Grace, and pursuing his way homeward, sought the silence of his chamber, and the sweet solace of sleep.

The next day, the result of Mrs. Lang's visit somewhat amended and exaggerated, was currently reported, and flew, as if by telegraph, from ear to ear.

The Fords, though, determined not to be outdone.

The next evening, Mrs. Grover, a particular friend of Mrs. Ford's, called, and Grace's affections were again attacked.

"Well, Grace, I come to congratulate you on your approaching debut in another character, or with another name rather."

"I hardly know what you refer to, Mrs. Grover," replied Grace.

"Why, I understood the other day, that you were to be Mrs. Ford,—no, I should say Carleton."

"Do you hear that, mother," said Grace.

"As to that, Mrs. Grover," said Mrs. Lee, "I have no doubt both the young men will make very acceptable

sons-in-law ; but whether either of them would make an acceptable husband for Grace, is another matter, of which I have nothing to say."

"I think you would like to see me change into Mrs. Ford, if I understand you aright, Mrs. Grover," remarked Grace. \*

"I think I should not be sorry, Grace. I am not here, though, to speak for Mr. Ford, as he can speak for himself if he chooses."

"Well, Mrs. Grover, as it seems so pleasant a romance to you, I shall be forced to let you have all the pleasure you can in thinking so favorably of Mr. Ford. As for Mrs. Ford who is to be, I remain silent."

"I shall not be displeased at all, Grace, to address you as Mrs. Ford some future day," rejoined Mrs. Grover, as pleading other calls and the lateness of the hour, she withdrew to communicate to Mrs. Ford the results of her interview.

The next morning Ford appeared at breakfast table somewhat troubled in mind and appearance, and with but little appetite.

"Why, what is the matter with you, Francis?" inquired his mother ; "you really look blue, as if something was not right. Are you ill?"

Ford said nothing, but idly reposed his head on his hand, and, with the other, slowly stirred the contents of his coffee cup together.

Seeing he remained despondent, Mrs. Ford determined to cheer him up.

"I know what you are thinking of, Francis," remarked his mother.

"I've no doubt you do," he replied. "Guess what I heard the other night."

"What! about Grace Lee, do you mean, Francis?"

"Yes, mother, and you have probably heard the same thing, namely, that she is engaged to Carleton. It's all around town, mother, thick as flies in summer time."

"Never mind that, Francis, I've something to tell you. Your old friend Mrs. Grover went up and saw Grace, and conversed with her about this very thing, and she has good reason to know that there is no truth in the report whatever, so I should not mind it in the least."

"It's no use, mother. It's all uncertain as it ever was. Besides, there is a mystery in the conduct of Grace which I have tried in vain to fathom. I can neither discover, nor dare I ask, any explanations of it, for fear she might think I was too inquisitive."

"In what does this strangeness of manner which you refer to, consist, Francis?"

"I can hardly describe it, mother."

"Is it impoliteness, or a desire to be rid of your company, Francis?"

"No, not that, mother."

"Reserve, then, Francis?"

"Yes, mother, a little I should think — scarcely perceptible — not outright coldness exactly, nor harshness, but kindness and friendship tempered with a little conservatism. Just enough to make a young man feel uncomfortable. On the politics of the heart, mother, she is not a radical at all, neither does she seem to approach it in the least."

"Does she seem always glad to see you, Francis, when you call upon her?"

"Yes, mother, she apparently likes my company, and does her best to entertain me. Withal, she is as interesting a piece of humanity as I care to study."

"Well, Francis, I should propose to her the first opportunity I could get, and break the ice while it is yet thin."

When ice begins to grow between two human hearts, there is no telling how thick and deep it may become in a short time, freezing up all the warm outflowings of affection from one to the other, and creating between them an impassable wall of coldness and estrangement, over which no angels of love or friendship can climb. Lovely flowers may grow in the hearts on each side of this barrier, and gladness and peace be therein, but the icy wall still remains, unless thawed by the warm love of the hearts which built it. Beautiful indeed in the desert of life, is the meeting of the rivers of love and friendship.

Thus, perhaps, Mrs. Ford reasoned, when she advised her son to the most important step he could take. The possibility of failure she had not reckoned on. Certainly she could not see how Grace could refuse Francis — her dear son Francis, and yet she felt a mother's anxiety on the all important subject.

But, however dearly parents may love their children, there are but very few others who can love them so well. Too often, when children of either sex have left the parental roof, they have left true love and happiness behind them, to know but little of it thereafter. Marriage which

should produce harmony and love, too often creates trouble and discord, because outward appearances and circumstances are more looked to and regarded, than character and mind. Many, through their love, overlook certain deficiencies in their betrothed companions, which, in others they are quick to notice and condemn. There is a certain kind of love which is blind, and this is the love which creates so much unhappiness in the world. True love is not blind, though there be but few lovers who possess it. In this world the Marthas are many, but the Marys are few.

"Supposing I fail?" asked Francis, in reply to his mother's last remark."

"Well, Francis, she can either accept or refuse you."

"If I could only get rid of Carleton, mother. If he would only be defeated in his suit, I should then be consoled for failure in my own."

"Don't be discouraged, Francis, you may yet win Grace Lee, in spite of Carleton."

"May — yes, mother, but may is not so true a word as some others. Moreover I have been managing every way to see Grace alone, when there were no others present, but I have not succeeded. There is always some one with her, as if to ward off love-making. Unless I can see her alone, I cannot propose to her."

"That's something curious, Francis, I declare. Perhaps there is a third rival. From what Mrs. Grover said, I should judge your chance as favorable."

"I'll tell you, mother, supposing you see Mrs. Lee, and hint the matter to her, and see if you can find out

any thing by her, by mentioning the rumors you have heard."

"That I will do, Francis."

The plan of Ford in this, was to bring family influence to bear, if possible, on Grace, who seemed so mysteriously conservative. As the two families were intimate, there seemed to be no particular objection to Mrs. Ford's pursuing such a course. She therefore the next week made a call on Mrs. Lee. The gist of the conversation naturally turned on Grace and her matrimonial prospects, by an inquiry from Mrs. Ford.

"Well, Mrs. Lee, Grace has not got married yet, has she?"

"No, Mrs. Ford, there are many who want her to be, though. There are so many she can have, I really believe she is bewildered."

"There are many rumors round that she is engaged to Carleton, Mrs. Lee."

"More than that, Mrs. Ford — it is rumored she is also engaged to your son Francis."

"What, Mrs. Lee — to my son Francis — why how you talk!" exclaimed Mrs. Ford, affecting sudden and profound ignorance.

"That's what is rumored, Mrs. Ford, I can assure you."

"I have not heard Francis intimate any such thing in the least, Mrs. Lee."

"Of the truth of these rumors, Mrs. Ford, I have no means of judging, except through Grace, and she would, I think, enter into no engagement without consulting us."

"I should feel very much pained to think that Grace would trifle with either."

"I am sorry, Mrs. Ford, to think that you could hint at any such conduct on the part of my daughter Grace. I do not think she intends to trifle with any one. As a woman she can love but one only, Mrs. Ford. That you are aware of by your own experience. Moreover, she has a right to make a choice out of many. As far as I am concerned, Mrs. Ford, I had just as lives see Grace marry your son as any one, if she truly loves him. The choice of a son-in-law is not mine. It rests with Grace alone. She has received Francis the same as she receives other young gentlemen of her acquaintance. I know your feelings, Mrs. Ford, but of the preferences of my daughter, matrimonially, I cannot inform you. I am not aware that she has given any especial encouragement to one more than another, and therefore I am unable to judge of the truth of the many rumors afloat."

"However, I would not advise your son Francis to be too sanguine, Mrs. Ford," remarked Mrs. Lee, as the former took her departure.

Mrs. Ford had not been gone an hour when Mrs. Carleton came bustling in from out of the rain-drops, her latest silk dress rustling, and bearing some faint resemblance to the murmuring of the breeze through the summer groves. A look of motherly anxiety was on her face as she sank down with a sigh of relief in the velvet-cushioned chair.

"Take off your things, Mrs. Carleton, do!" urged Mrs. Lee.

"No, not now, Mrs. Lee," replied Mrs. Carleton, "I did not intend to see you so unexpectedly, but impolite clouds give no warning or invites before hand."

"But you had better, Mrs. Carleton, and stay to tea with us."

"The fact is, Mrs. Lee, I expect company myself, and I ought to have been at home before now. I will stay a few minutes till the worst of the storm is over, and then scud between the rain-drops home, with a borrowed umbrella perhaps."

"How is Grace, Mrs. Lee?"

"Very well, Mrs. Carleton. I will call her down. She is upstairs."

"No, do not call her, Mrs. Lee. Between you and me, I hear she is engaged."

"What! Engaged to be married, Mrs. Carleton!"

"Yes, Mrs. Lee, engaged to be married, and that is the only kind of engagement a young lady cares much about. Is it not so, Mrs. Lee?"

"Yes, somewhat, Mrs. Carleton," replied Mrs. Lee, laughingly, as both were naturally carried back to their girlhood days.

"Well, Mrs. Carleton," remarked Mrs. Lee, as if starting from a pleasant reverie into which she had fallen, "I have heard nothing definite from Grace. In thinking well of other young men, Mrs. Carleton, I do not desire to disparage your son Guy, in the least. I should feel happy, though, to behold Grace married to one worthy of her. This alone is my chief anxiety. But very few loves hold over after the honey-moon sets."



"True, Mrs. Lee, but Grace is so lovely and attractive, that a man must be a brute indeed, who could not love her always," remarked Mrs. Carleton, who, noticing that the rain was nearly over, resumed her way homeward, Mrs. Lee kindly lending her an umbrella to help her way through the drops, while she departed down the street with but few crumbs of comfort or promise.

One result of these two interviews to the two families concerned, was, that neither saw that the cloudy rumors in the atmosphere around them, had the silver lining of truth. As far as this was concerned, they were as much in the fog as ever. They had moreover failed to discover the leaning of Grace's affections. In a word they were like two vessels bound for the same port, unable to make land,—bewildered by dense mists and darkness,—and finding it impossible to fathom or even cast anchor. Schemers, though, are fertile in expedients. On the ruins of one plan, rise immediately the outlines of another. Not more real is the building of castles in the air than the airy nothings out of which love sometimes strives to build realities. Not until the making of creation did the stars sing together their bridal hymns. Sweeter indeed than the music of the stars is the harmony of two hearts, which float along beautifully together through sunshine and through storm, across the ocean of life. Into the deep mysteries of human love angels desire to look. Happier perchance they might be, if they could experience it.

It was plain to both the Carletons and Fords, that no such influence as they had invoked, could be brought to bear effectually upon Grace. In the meanwhile, both

lovers dreaded to bring on, as yet, any decisive issue. Not content, though, with such rumors to influence Grace, the love-plotters tried the effects of counter rumors.

The first thing, therefore, that Mr. Lee heard on Change, the next day, was the remark, made in his hearing by a gentleman unknown to him, "Well, Mr. Frank Ford is going to marry the heiress, Miss Lynne, so I understand."

"A good match, certainly. They will make a very pretty couple, I should think," replied the person addressed.

On looking around him, Mr. Lee could not distinguish either of the speakers, though he evidently felt it was hitting very near home, and it naturally set him to thinking of Grace, for Ford, he knew, had paid many attentions to his daughter. What would Grace think of that, if she had heard it, queried Mr. Lee within himself. He had heard so many rumors of late, that this seemed to cap the climax, and he resolved that night to arrive at the truth or error of them, if possible.

On arriving home, and calling Mrs. Lee into the sitting-room, he stated what he had heard.

In reply, Mrs. Lee recounted the conversation she had had with Mrs. Ford and Mr. Carleton, which in turn startled Mr. Lee, who remarked to his wife, —

"Well, Annie, you don't suppose it possible that Grace would do any thing of the kind without our advice and consent?"

"I should not think so, certainly. I do not believe it," replied Mrs. Lee.

"Call Grace, wife, and we will ask her. There are so many rumors flying around, I am a little uneasy."

Grace soon made her appearance.

"Well, Grace," inquired her father, "how many marriage engagements have you on hand?"

"What, of my own, father?"

"Yes, Grace."

"Why! none that I know of."

"If what outsiders say is true, Grace, you have several on hand."

"More than I can dispose of then, father. I have indulged in no such pleasing intentions yet, as to engage myself. Have you heard any thing of them, mother?"

"Yes, Grace, it is rumored extensively that you are engaged to both Ford and Carleton, and another rumor that your father heard was, that Mr. Ford was engaged to Miss Lynne."

"What a batch of rumors, father, you have picked up. They have probably sprung from the fact that I have continued to receive both Carleton's and Ford's attentions on a par; but thus far they are but friends to me."

"Why not decide, Grace, upon one of them?"

"I don't see that I can as yet, father, for neither has proposed."

"Why not dismiss them both, and settle the question, or else decline receiving them, Grace?"

"I cannot do that yet, father, without losing their friendship, which for awhile I wish to retain."

"You have no particular liking then for either of them, Grace, if I understand you."

"Not as yet, father."

"That is all I care to know, Grace, which settles these

rumors. Let them hereafter disturb those who circulate them."

"Carleton and Ford, though, are both worthy young men, Grace," remarked Mrs. Lee.

"Yes, mother," replied Grace, "I do not dispute it. I neither love nor hate them. I have love only for one at present, but it is neither of those you have named."

To the mind of Grace, a crisis hastened by late events had presented itself. Loving neither Ford nor Carleton, and her unknown hero not having appeared, she felt undecided as to what course to pursue.

How painful are the moments of indecision, when the compass of the mind flies around, seeking in vain for a star in the heavens to fix and hold it. Many such indeed there are, tossed about on the sea of life without guide or compass,—for whom no star in the heaven shines, and whose only port is the rocks of ruin.

A year had passed by, and she had not seen him. Should she give up all hopes of finding him? Supposing she should never again see him? What then? she queried to herself. She could dismiss all thoughts of him. "Not so," seemed some secret voice beside her to whisper. Was it some presentiment that reassured her?

Ah, she could not yet give up the forlorn hope which was the stepping-stone to her heart's temple of love. No,—she resolved to herself in her lonely thoughts, I will not give him up yet.

Her real object in future would be, to keep as strict a line of reserve as possible with Ford and Carleton, as they each struggled desperately, with deeper schemes, to win the

prize. As in many such cases, the lovers grew jealous of each other, a mistake which led to deeper mistakes, and paved the way to unexpected results.

Each was acting upon the plans of the other, and in so doing, curious effects resulted sometimes. Miss Lynne and Lucy Ford having a double object in view, played their game with tact and vigor, which was directly opposite to Grace's reserve and coldness. Both the young ladies, though, inwardly thanked Grace for her disinterested kindness in their behalf.

To the mind of Ford there was a geniality and warmth of heart in Miss Lynne, besides, was she not an heiress and belle? Yet, for all this, it was plain to him that he could not relinquish Grace. As long as Carleton remained his rival it should not be. It should never be said of him that he resigned Grace Lee's hand in favor of Carleton, and probably Carleton thought the same of Ford. This in short was the position of all parties concerned, ere they plunged deeper in the game of love.

## CHAPTER XIX.

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All for a heart.

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AS Carleton sat deeply immersed in thought, and somewhat troubled in mind with various endeavors to search up some new plan of strategy, his cousin entered and took a seat beside him, ere he was aware of her presence.

“Well, Guy, I suppose I need not ask what you were thinking of.”

“Why so, cousin?”

“Because I can tell very nearly, Guy.”

“I wish I could do that myself, cousin, but in fact I had some good intentions under way.”

“Carry them out then,—carry them out, Guy, that’s all that is wanting in such a case.”

“Truly said, cousin,—the very meaning of truth itself; but often there are great obstacles in the way of good intentions. As regards my love-suit, it is especially so. Only think, cousin, my heart has been really aching with impatience to propose to Grace, but my time evidently has not come. Although I have played the spy on Ford, yet I cannot prevent him from having interviews with Grace. It is impossible, for this country is the freest country to make love in, and, moreover, it has the

prettiest girls to make love to, too. Isn't that so, cousin?"

"Perhaps, Guy, when you think of Grace, it is, but if you were in England, in love with some English maiden, you would think differently."

"The deuce of it is, cousin, to see Grace alone. She always endeavors to have somebody with her, as if to prevent something that might be said. It makes me so vexed sometimes, that I wish there was no one else in the world but Grace Lee and myself."

"A wholesome wish, truly, Guy. Why not send a note to Grace Lee, asking her for the privilege of a private interview, on business of importance. I don't think she would refuse you."

"Too business like, altogether, cousin. That is not the way to win a woman; you ought to know better, yourself; besides it's bringing delicate matters to a too bold and decisive turn. Just as if I was to pull Grace Lee to me in such a rough way as that, cousin."

"Well, Guy, how should I know any thing about winning women? I don't see as I can propose any thing."

"I'll tell you, cousin, a plan which I think will work. You are acquainted with Mrs. Lane."

"Yes, Guy, somewhat. I had a slight introduction to her."

"Very slight, cousin, ha, ha! but never mind, she is a very intimate friend of the Lees, and especially of Grace's friend, Lizzie, and if you can get her to call, and take up Lizzie's attention, at the same time I take up Grace's attention, I might then seize an opportunity, and gain an interview."

"We shall have to get Mrs. Lane interested, then, Guy."

"Not particularly, cousin. That is, I wish to get her interested, but do not wish her to know it. I'll tell you, we are to have a fair at our church soon, and if you can get Mrs. Lane to call on Lizzie this evening, to see if she can take a part in it, I think I can succeed very well under such a feint."

"Good, Guy ; very good. I will see Mrs. Lane to-day, and tell her that the manager of the fair is very desirous Lizzie should contribute her services."

"Miss Lynne did as she promised, and the plan so deeply laid was undertaken and carried out."

That very evening, as Guy sat in the parlor with Grace, the door-bell rang, and Mrs. Lane entered to see Lizzie on special business, and Lizzie, leading the way to her own room, left Grace alone with Guy, but not idle however ; for Grace, just before the door-bell rang, had sat down to her piano, and continued to play for Guy's especial edification, while he sat gnashing his teeth with vexation, and muttering a curse on all pianos in general. By the time Grace got through with her playing, and ere he had concluded his praises, which he always bestowed on her for her perfections in such an elegant accomplishment, Lizzie had returned, and Guy saw that his plan had signally failed. How to propose to her, while playing on the piano, he could not see. To vex him still more, Lucy Ford came in soon after Mrs. Lane's departure, and, between the two charming girls, Guy found his attentions wavering like a vane amid shifting winds. To crown his



discretion. Guy had to exercise his gallantry to no little extent in seeing Miss Ford safely home, and, as she was a very warm-hearted and genial companion, he was somewhat comforted when taking Grace's still mysterious conduct into consideration.

The next morning Guy and his cousin had another interview.

"Well, Guy, how did you succeed last evening? Got the lay fixed?" she inquired.

"No, cousin, I had my usual ill luck. By the way, how inquisitive your young ladies are on matrimonial subjects."

"I thought you wanted me to be inquisitive, Guy."

"If you can be inquisitive enough to tell me how I can win Grace Lee, cousin, I would like to have you."

"Well, Guy, didn't Mrs. Lane call?"

"Yes, cousin, all went well as far as that; but, just before she called, and took Lizzie's attention that way, Grace got playing on her piano, and so very desirous was she to entertain me, that I had no chance to tell of my deep and ardent admiration of her."

"We did not take the piano into consideration beforehand, did we, Guy?"

"No, cousin, but Grace does play splendidly. Her piano seemed, though, like an instrument of torture to me, or, in other words, as if I was one, and that Grace unstrung my nerves with every note she struck. Bad luck, cousin! bad luck! and as a finish to it, Lucy Ford came in, on a short visit, and there was nothing left for me in such a case but to succumb, and see her home, for fear something might happen to her. A charming girl, Lucy Ford is."

"Charming girl, Guy, did you say?"

"Yes, cousin, very charming! It's not every young man that has such a pretty girl to go home with as Miss Ford is."

"Ah, ha, Guy, you have changed your tune."

"I wished, cousin, last night, many times, that Grace Lee would change her tune too, for her charming music filled me all full of discord. All last evening I imagined I was a piano out of tune, and that Grace Lee was playing on me."

"Exceedingly musical, Guy! You must not try to win a girl possessed of so musical a taste," replied Miss Lynne, as, taking her lamp in hand, she bade him good night, and departed upstairs to the dim, distant realms of Morpheus.

After his cousin had retired, Guy sat thoughtful and meditative, and, in fact, was at his wits end as to what particular plan to pursue in regard to Grace. She seemed happy enough to see him whenever he called, and apparently did her best to entertain him. Whenever he came, just the same spirit of kindness and gentleness met him. She, in fact, in her conduct, neither repelled nor attracted him.

How many such friendships there are in this world! Often we see two lives which seem bound closely together, yet between them no love can ever pass. They are the same whenever they meet, kind and regardful of each other, for whom, if any angels of love with bridal robes wait, they wait alas, forever; the wedding-ring unworn — the bridal vows forever unspoken.

This was the position between Grace and her two lovers,

though they knew it not. Through their love for Grace they waited patiently for some better token in her conduct toward them.

To some sepulchres, though, the angels of the resurrection come not to roll away the stone and blow their trumpets of life.

"Ah, it must be some desperate plan," muttered Carleton to himself, as he still sat meditating where his cousin left him. A thought struck him. "I have a plan now that will do — one that is novel, but every way practicable. Who shall I get to put it into execution? Dear me, I really wish that plans would execute themselves. In fact, many plans have executed those who made them," colloquized Guy to himself. As Carleton was driven to desperation in his love for Grace, on the one hand, and by her conduct toward him on the other, he resolved on some decisive *coup de main*.

"Yes, be it crime then," muttered Carleton, as, startled by the bold move he was about to make, he looked around the room dimly figured by midnight phantom shadows, and satisfied he was alone, returned again to his self-communion.

"Yes, the deed should be done, and done by himself. The rooms, where he had seen Grace and enjoyed happy moments with her, should never echo again with his own voice, or the voice of a rival. Never more in that house should he know the joy or sorrow of the past."

Underlying Carleton's plan, though, was a deeper scheme. The Lee mansion was of but little consequence, provided he could rescue Grace from the burning flames.

## CHAPTER XX.

---

'Tis night, calm night. Not e'en a sound  
Breaketh with sweetness on its silent harp.

---

IT was in the dead of night. The clouds lowered dark and heavily, so dark even, that a muffled figure pushed the dense darkness aside as it skulked along its way. The hour of midnight pealed forth its notes, which to one was the signal of daring and adventure. Armed with a brace of loaded pistols, and a bag of combustible materials, under his loosely hanging cloak, he proceeded till he came in the rear of the house which was surrounded by a fence.

Stopping and looking around, he patiently waited, and listened for sight or sound of any thing which was likely to mar his purpose or betray him in its execution. But all was still. The first thing to be done was to scale the fence. Taking from beneath his cloak a folding ladder of peculiar construction, and putting it up side of the fence, he was soon over in the yard, drawing the ladder after him ; when, easily shoving up a window, he was soon in the house. Exceedingly careful the incendiary worked, for a single noise might defeat him. After gaining the house, he waited long and patiently ere he commenced

further operations. Satisfied that all was right, he completed his preparations with due haste and extreme caution, which only awaited the applying of the torch to seal their execution.

Creeping softly to the window, and hearkening in vain for the least sound or footfall, he was reassured. Lighting his torch, and shading it with his hand, he lit three piles of combustibles in turn, then closing the window, quietly departed as he came. Criminal in mind as Carleton was before, he was now criminal in deed. After the first guilty crime is committed, one is not so bold as before. This was so with Carleton. He trembled all over visibly, while he awaited with painful anxiety the sounding of the fire alarm. Owing to the position of the Lee mansion, and the great quiet of the streets, together with the exceeding dark night, the fire made considerable headway ere it was discovered, and an alarm given. Carleton, rather uneasy, and not pleased at the thought of burning a whole family up in their sleep, was among the very first on the ground, duly armed with a ladder.

Now Grace's chamber had two windows to it. In his haste and excitement he placed the ladder against one window, and calculating on a rescue of Grace and the family by this means, he was rather surprised, on reaching the top of the ladder, to find that the bird had fled. He was more surprised, though, at seeing another ladder stretched up to the opposite window, at which a young man was just receiving the precious burden of Grace in his arms, for safe delivery to terra firma.

Mortified exceedingly by another's playing the part in

the drama which he had assigned to himself, and which was the most important part of his plan, he found nothing left for him to do ; and descending to the ground, and folding his arms, he contemplated the ruin of the Lee mansion, with a troubled spirit and guilty conscience. Troubled indeed he might well be, for the red breath of murder lay very near his soul, and at such a price, to be defeated of his purpose, was indeed a heavy retribution.

The next morning the first thing that met Carleton's guilty eyes, was, the reading in the paper the account of the fire, together with the daring rescue of Grace Lee by his rival, Francis Ford, and the subsequent rescue of the family from a fiery death.

Disappointed as he was before, he was now maddened at the miscarriage of his darling and desperate plan, and he felt at once that all was lost. To feel and know that his guilty plans had worked so well to the advantage of Ford, his rival, was a mortification he could hardly endure. That this should have happened, better he thought would it have been to endure a hundred refusals from Grace.

From this time forward Francis Ford was the hero of the hour, and all commended him for his daring, in rescuing Grace and the family at the peril of his own life. With thankful hearts they hailed and received their deliverer, who arrived just in the right time, and with just the means to save them.

There was no end to the praises and plaudits heaped upon Ford, and, by nearly all, the matrimonial destiny of Grace was settled beyond discussion or dispute.

As the Lee mansion was well insured, but little loss was

felt financially, by the burning of the house itself. The personal property within no money could ever replace.

On account of their misfortune, Mr. Clarence, a particular friend of Mr. Lee, offered him the free use of his house till he could make some permanent arrangement for himself and family.

As Mr. Clarence's family had just gone on a European tour, nothing prevented Mr. Lee from accepting this kind offer, Mr. Clarence asserting, that their company and society, and especially the sweet smiles of Grace, would more than repay him. After being comfortably settled in their temporary quarters, Mr. Ford called upon Grace, and received her thanks and those of the family for the services he had so timely rendered.

"One reward only I ask, Mr. Lee," replied Ford, "and that is the hand of her whom I have saved, and whom I have ever truly loved and esteemed."

"Ah, Mr. Ford, I would that I could comply with your request, but Grace alone must give you her answer," and, as he retired, Grace and Ford were left alone together.

A crisis now was precipitated by events, for which Grace was totally unprepared.

"Do I presume too much, Miss Lee?" said Mr. Ford, as, taking her hand in his own, he bent forward eagerly for her reply.

How many can remember such sweet moments, when through two united hands, which is love's telegraph line, two hearts communicated with each other. Ye that have lost interest in life and human love, and who grow homesick in a world of care, as the years roll on, go back and

gather up the sweet flowers of immortal youth which are not yet faded! Go back! go back often to love's early days. Time in its flight cannot carry from you their pleasant memories.

As Ford made his proposal and awaited his answer, Grace did not withdraw her hand, but she was apparently puzzled as to what reply to make. To Ford, alas, the position was novel and interesting. He had been waiting patiently and hopefully for such an interview, and now circumstances had given him the opportunity.

As Grace seemed at a loss to reply, Ford resumed, —

“Tell me, Miss Lee, do I presume too much to call your hand and heart mine?”

“No, Mr. Ford, I cannot say you presume. I feel, though, an inability, at present, to make you an answer proportionate to your expectations.”

Ford started perceptibly. Could she whom he had saved reply to him so coldly!

“I love you, Miss Lee. Do you not love me in return?” rejoined Ford.

“Would I could love you as you deserve, Mr. Ford. Pardon me, Mr. Ford, if I seem unkind, or give you pain, but, in reality, I cannot at present give you a decisive answer,” replied Grace.

“Ah, terrible suspense! Must I indeed hope against hope, Miss Lee?” and relinquishing Grace's hand, Ford sank back in a lethargy of despair.

Grace in fact knew not how to meet the question so suddenly forced upon her. In the gaining of time only did she see any clear pathway. Pitying Ford in his



prettiest girls to make love to, too. Isn't that so, cousin?"

"Perhaps, Guy, when you think of Grace, it is, but if you were in England, in love with some English maiden, you would think differently."

"The deuce of it is, cousin, to see Grace alone. She always endeavors to have somebody with her, as if to prevent something that might be said. It makes me so vexed sometimes, that I wish there was no one else in the world but Grace Lee and myself."

"A wholesome wish, truly, Guy. Why not send a note to Grace Lee, asking her for the privilege of a private interview, on business of importance. I don't think she would refuse you."

"Too business like, altogether, cousin. That is not the way to win a woman; you ought to know better, yourself; besides it's bringing delicate matters to a too bold and decisive turn. Just as if I was to pull Grace Lee to me in such a rough way as that, cousin."

"Well, Guy, how should I know any thing about winning women? I don't see as I can propose any thing."

"I'll tell you, cousin, a plan which I think will work. You are acquainted with Mrs. Lane."

"Yes, Guy, somewhat. I had a slight introduction to her."

"Very slight, cousin, ha, ha! but never mind, she is a very intimate friend of the Lees, and especially of Grace's friend, Lizzie, and if you can get her to call, and take up Lizzie's attention, at the same time I take up Grace's attention, I might then seize an opportunity, and gain an interview."

"We shall have to get Mrs. Lane interested, then, Guy."

"Not particularly, cousin. That is, I wish to get her interested, but do not wish her to know it. I'll tell you, we are to have a fair at our church soon, and if you can get Mrs. Lane to call on Lizzie this evening, to see if she can take a part in it, I think I can succeed very well under such a feint."

"Good, Guy ; very good. I will see Mrs. Lane to-day, and tell her that the manager of the fair is very desirous Lizzie should contribute her services."

"Miss Lynne did as she promised, and the plan so deeply laid was undertaken and carried out."

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discretion, Guy had to exercise his gallantry to no little extent, in seeing Miss Ford safely home, and, as she was a very warm-hearted and genial companion, he was somewhat comforted when taking Grace's still mysterious conduct into consideration.

The next morning Guy and his cousin had another interview.

"Well, Guy, how did you succeed last evening? Got the day fixed?" she inquired.

"No, cousin, I had my usual ill luck. By the way, how inquisitive you young ladies are on matrimonial subjects."

"I thought you wanted me to be inquisitive, Guy."

"If you can be inquisitive enough to tell me how I can win Grace Lee, cousin, I would like to have you."

"Well, Guy, didn't Mrs. Lane call?"

"Yes, cousin, all went well as far as that; but, just before she called, and took Lizzie's attention that way, Grace got playing on her piano, and so very desirous was she to entertain me, that I had no chance to tell of my deep and ardent admiration of her."

"We did not take the piano into consideration beforehand, did we, Guy?"

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"Charming girl, Guy, did you say?"

"Yes, cousin, very charming! It's not every young man that has such a pretty girl to go home with as Miss Ford is."

"Ah, ha, Guy, you have changed your tune."

"I wished, cousin, last night, many times, that Grace Lee would change her tune too, for her charming music filled me all full of discord. All last evening I imagined I was a piano out of tune, and that Grace Lee was playing on me."

"Exceedingly musical, Guy! You must not try to win a girl possessed of so musical a taste," replied Miss Lynne, as, taking her lamp in hand, she bade him good night, and departed upstairs to the dim, distant realms of Morpheus.

After his cousin had retired, Guy sat thoughtful and meditative, and, in fact, was at his wits end as to what particular plan to pursue in regard to Grace. She seemed happy enough to see him whenever he called, and apparently did her best to entertain him. Whenever he came, just the same spirit of kindness and gentleness met him. She, in fact, in her conduct, neither repelled nor attracted him.

How many such friendships there are in this world! Often we see two lives which seem bound closely together, yet between them no love can ever pass. They are the same whenever they meet, kind and regardful of each other, for whom, if any angels of love with bridal robes wait, they wait alas, forever; the wedding-ring unworn — the bridal vows forever unspoken.

This was the position between Grace and her two lovers,

though they knew it not. Through their love for Grace they waited patiently for some better token in her conduct toward them.

To some sepulchres, though, the angels of the resurrection come not to roll away the stone and blow their trumpets of life.

"Ah, it must be some desperate plan," muttered Carleton to himself, as he still sat meditating where his cousin left him. A thought struck him. "I have a plan now that will do — one that is novel, but every way practicable. Who shall I get to put it into execution? Dear me, I really wish that plans would execute themselves. In fact, many plans have executed those who made them," colloquized Guy to himself. As Carleton was driven to desperation in his love for Grace, on the one hand, and by her conduct toward him on the other, he resolved on some decisive *coup de main*.

"Yes, be it crime then," muttered Carleton, as, startled by the bold move he was about to make, he looked around the room dimly figured by midnight phantom shadows, and satisfied he was alone, returned again to his self-communion.

"Yes, the deed should be done, and done by himself. The rooms, where he had seen Grace and enjoyed happy moments with her, should never echo again with his own voice, or the voice of a rival. Never more in that house should he know the joy or sorrow of the past."

Underlying Carleton's plan, though, was a deeper scheme. The Lee mansion was of but little consequence, provided he could rescue Grace from the burning flames.

## CHAPTER XX.

---

'Tis night, calm night. Not e'en a sound  
Breaketh with sweetness on its silent harp.

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IT was in the dead of night. The clouds lowered dark and heavily, so dark even, that a muffled figure pushed the dense darkness aside as it skulked along its way. The hour of midnight pealed forth its notes, which to one was the signal of daring and adventure. Armed with a brace of loaded pistols, and a bag of combustible materials, under his loosely hanging cloak, he proceeded till he came in the rear of the house which was surrounded by a fence.

Stopping and looking around, he patiently waited, and listened for sight or sound of any thing which was likely to mar his purpose or betray him in its execution. But all was still. The first thing to be done was to scale the fence. Taking from beneath his cloak a folding ladder of peculiar construction, and putting it up side of the fence, he was soon over in the yard, drawing the ladder after him ; when, easily shoving up a window, he was soon in the house. Exceedingly careful the incendiary worked, for a single noise might defeat him. After gaining the house, he waited long and patiently ere he commenced

further operations. Satisfied that all was right, he completed his preparations with due haste and extreme caution, which only awaited the applying of the torch to seal their exertion.

Creeping softly to the window, and hearkening in vain for the least sound or footfall, he was reassured. Lighting his torch, and shading it with his hand, he lit three piles of combustibles in turn, then closing the window, quietly departed as he came. Criminal in mind as Carleton was before, he was now criminal in deed. After the first guilty crime is committed, one is not so bold as before. This was so with Carleton. He trembled all over visibly, while he awaited with painful anxiety the sounding of the fire alarm. Owing to the position of the Lee mansion, and the great quiet of the streets, together with the exceeding dark night, the fire made considerable headway ere it was discovered, and an alarm given. Carleton, rather uneasy, and not pleased at the thought of burning a whole family up in their sleep, was among the very first on the ground, duly armed with a ladder.

Now Grace's chamber had two windows to it. In his haste and excitement he placed the ladder against one window, and calculating on a rescue of Grace and the family by this means, he was rather surprised, on reaching the top of the ladder, to find that the bird had fled. He was more surprised, though, at seeing another ladder stretched up to the opposite window, at which a young man was just receiving the precious burden of Grace in his arms, for safe delivery to terra firma.

Mortified exceedingly by another's playing the part in

the drama which he had assigned to himself, and which was the most important part of his plan, he found nothing left for him to do ; and descending to the ground, and folding his arms, he contemplated the ruin of the Lee mansion, with a troubled spirit and guilty conscience. Troubled indeed he might well be, for the red breath of murder lay very near his soul, and at such a price, to be defeated of his purpose, was indeed a heavy retribution.

The next morning the first thing that met Carleton's guilty eyes, was, the reading in the paper the account of the fire, together with the daring rescue of Grace Lee by his rival, Francis Ford, and the subsequent rescue of the family from a fiery death.

Disappointed as he was before, he was now maddened at the miscarriage of his darling and desperate plan, and he felt at once that all was lost. To feel and know that his guilty plans had worked so well to the advantage of Ford, his rival, was a mortification he could hardly endure. That this should have happened, better he thought would it have been to endure a hundred refusals from Grace.

From this time forward Francis Ford was the hero of the hour, and all commended him for his daring, in rescuing Grace and the family at the peril of his own life. With thankful hearts they hailed and received their deliverer, who arrived just in the right time, and with just the means to save them.

There was no end to the praises and plaudits heaped upon Ford, and, by nearly all, the matrimonial destiny of Grace was settled beyond discussion or dispute.

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There was no end to the praises and plaudits heaped upon Ford, and, by nearly all, the matrimonial destiny of Grace was settled beyond discussion or dispute.

As the Lee mansion was well insured, but little loss was

felt financially, by the burning of the house itself. The personal property within no money could ever replace.

On account of their misfortune, Mr. Clarence, a particular friend of Mr. Lee, offered him the free use of his house till he could make some permanent arrangement for himself and family.

As Mr. Clarence's family had just gone on a European tour, nothing prevented Mr. Lee from accepting this kind offer, Mr. Clarence asserting, that their company and society, and especially the sweet smiles of Grace, would more than repay him. After being comfortably settled in their temporary quarters, Mr. Ford called upon Grace, and received her thanks and those of the family for the services he had so timely rendered.

"One reward only I ask, Mr. Lee," replied Ford, "and that is the hand of her whom I have saved, and whom I have ever truly loved and esteemed."

"Ah, Mr. Ford, I would that I could comply with your request, but Grace alone must give you her answer," and, as he retired, Grace and Ford were left alone together.

A crisis now was precipitated by events, for which Grace was totally unprepared.

"Do I presume too much, Miss Lee?" said Mr. Ford, as, taking her hand in his own, he bent forward eagerly for her reply.

How many can remember such sweet moments, when through two united hands, which is love's telegraph line, two hearts communicated with each other. Ye that have lost interest in life and human love, and who grow homesick in a world of care, as the years roll on, go back and

gather up the sweet flowers of immortal youth which are not yet faded! Go back! go back often to love's early days. Time in its flight cannot carry from you their pleasant memories.

As Ford made his proposal and awaited his answer, Grace did not withdraw her hand, but she was apparently puzzled as to what reply to make. To Ford, alas, the position was novel and interesting. He had been waiting patiently and hopefully for such an interview, and now circumstances had given him the opportunity.

As Grace seemed at a loss to reply, Ford resumed, —

“Tell me, Miss Lee, do I presume too much to call your hand and heart mine?”

“No, Mr. Ford, I cannot say you presume. I feel, though, an inability, at present, to make you an answer proportionate to your expectations.”

Ford started perceptibly. Could she whom he had saved reply to him so coldly!

“I love you, Miss Lee. Do you not love me in return?” rejoined Ford.

“Would I could love you as you deserve, Mr. Ford. Pardon me, Mr. Ford, if I seem unkind, or give you pain, but, in reality, I cannot at present give you a decisive answer,” replied Grace.

“Ah, terrible suspense! Must I indeed hope against hope, Miss Lee?” and relinquishing Grace's hand, Ford sank back in a lethargy of despair.

Grace in fact knew not how to meet the question so suddenly forced upon her. In the gaining of time only did she see any clear pathway. Pitying Ford in his

heart's struggle and entreaty, she sought to soothe and comfort him.

"Mr. Ford," remarked Grace, "you must bear in mind I have not made any final decision."

"Then, Miss Lee, I understand you. You feel as if you could give me no encouragement."

"I do not intimate that in reality, Mr. Ford."

"I wait then for your final answer, Miss Lee. The suit I have urged to-night, under such circumstances, I may never urge upon you again, either to accept or reject. I truly love you. Speak then, Miss Lee, the magic word which binds me to you, or denying me that, bid me depart in silence and despair, to see you no more."

"I pray you, Mr. Ford, urge me not yet to the final alternative. Give me time to decide what my reply to you ought to be."

Here the feelings of Grace gave way in a shower of pearly tears on her snow-white handkerchief.

"Forgive me, Miss Lee, if I have been too hasty. I have not asked you to love me because I saved your life, but because I love you. I will not urge you further, Miss Lee," and raising her hand to his lips, he bade her farewell, and departed.

Lizzie, on entering the room soon after, found Grace in tears.

"What now, Grace, have you accepted him?"

"Accepted who, Liz?"

"Why, Mr. Ford, Grace; who do you suppose I meant?"

"Not yet, Liz, I do not love him enough."

"But he saved your life, Grace."

"I know it, Liz, but there is no proof some one else might not have done as well. There is the trouble, though. I feel a debt of obligation to him I can never pay. In other words, he asks more than I can give him."

"Why so, Grace?"

"Because I do not love him, Liz."

"I see no other way but to tell him, then, Grace."

"I do not wish to do that, Liz. If he had not rescued me I should feel more free to do it. Dear me, how shall I ever discharge the obligation which I am under to him? Yet it is not plain to me that I must marry him, because he obeyed the common dictates of humanity, and rescued me; not at all."

"True, Grace, that is plain."

"Again, Liz, supposing I was engaged at the time to one whom I truly loved, and a stranger should have rescued me from a similar fate, am I therefore to break my engagement and sunder the dearest ties? To put it in a stronger light, suppose that stranger was a criminal, and a man wholly unworthy, am I to relinquish my true love, and cherish him in preference? Not at all. You see, Liz, that such an argument will not answer."

"But can you not endeavor to love Mr. Ford, Grace?"

"I do not see as I can, Liz, for love comes not by endeavors."

As Grace retired to rest she thought earnestly of her indebtedness to Ford. Whenever she thought of him, though, the handsome features of her unknown hero appeared before her, and his ruby lips parting, seemed to

whisper, "Not quite yet, love, wait awhile." Thinking and thinking, as most young people do, Grace cried herself to sleep, while the calm finger of the night gathered up her last tear, like a beautiful pearl within its ebony casket.

As for Ford, he went home with a troubled heart. It was as if he had been up some beautiful mountain of hope and love, and had been cruelly cast down into the valley of disappointment and despair. Her form he had pressed to his heart, and her hand he had kissed with the seal of his devotion. Sometimes it was forced upon him, that she loved another. Bitter truth, indeed, if he had saved her for some rival lover to hold and cherish.

The next week an inquest was held on the fire. The leader of the inquest, a man of considerable discernment, dismissed the jury for awhile for private consultation with Mr. Lee.

"Are you well acquainted with Mr. Francis Ford, the young man who rescued your daughter the other evening, Mr. Lee?"

"Well, yes, Mr. Lawrence, I am."

"Is he a steady and well-disposed young man, Mr. Lee?"

"As far as I know he is, Mr. Lawrence; but what has that to do with burning my house down?"

"A great deal, perhaps, Mr. Lee."

"In what respect, Mr. Lawrence?"

"Tell me, does not Mr. Ford wait on your daughter, Mr. Lee?"

"Well, yes, Mr. Lawrence, and as a reward for his res-

cuing her, he asks me to give her to him ; but I do not see what that has to do with the fire."

" Another question, Mr. Lee, has not Mr. Ford a rival in his suit, in the person of Guy Carleton ? "

" I believe so, Mr. Lawrence, as far as my observation goes, but I do not see as you are getting nearer to the incendiary by such questions."

" I cannot swear to it, Mr. Lee, in the absence of any evidence, but it certainly looks suspicious to me that a known lover of your daughter should be the first on the ground, and succeed in rescuing her from her chamber, unless there was some connecting circumstances between the two events.

" Ah, I see, Mr. Lawrence, the drift of your mind. You suspect Ford may have set my house on fire for the very purpose of rescuing my daughter with whom he is deeply in love, in order thus to effectually secure her as his own. I really did not think of that before. It certainly looks reasonable. I think, though, you have no case, without evidence to rest it on."

In Mr. Lee's mind these suspicions, hinted at by Mr. Lawrence, rose merely from the circumstantial evidence of the case, and, as the jury could find no corroborative facts, they rendered in their verdict accordingly, that it was the work of an incendiary.

Soon after this, Mr. Lee had a private interview with Grace, to whom he stated the suspicions of himself and the jury.

Grace, in return, stated the substance of the conversation last held with Ford.



"Then you have not accepted him, Grace."

"Not at all, father; how could I, if I did not love him?"

"Well, I am glad, Grace, the case stands so."

"I was to give him a decisive answer, though, father."

"If you do not love him, Grace, you certainly have a good reason for refusing him."

"I might put him on the same probation I have put myself, father."

"What probation is that, Grace?"

"Why if I do not get acquainted with that handsome young man I was telling you of, father, in a reasonable time, I shall then be freer to decide on some one else."

"Ah, that is it, Grace, then, — a noble resolution indeed, for I suppose you are resolved. Who ever heard the like before? That would be good material for a novel, Grace. You have so many lovers, though, I do not see what you will do with them all in the mean time."

"I am going to marry them off, father, soon as I can, reserving the best one for myself."

"Admirable, Grace! What a matrimonial manager you would make."

"I am afraid, Grace, that, as regards this young man you refer to, you build your heart's hopes on a very invisible foundation."

"Well, you know, father, that love is but a dream, and where the heart has no real foundation to build on, it builds castles in the air."

"Grace, you are indeed a philosopher of love, and I fear somewhat over hopeful of these castles in the air."

“Not at all, father. I know that sometimes these castles fall, but they leave no ruins. Often they pass, beautiful as they appear, into the possession of their owners, without deed or title. If my castles in the air are real, I would not exchange them for the best houses on Fifth Avenue or Beacon Street put together;” and Grace, in this conclusion, was undoubtedly right. Lovely indeed are the palaces and castles built by the clear waters of love and imagination, by the mind and heart. Beautiful on earth are the far-famed places of interest and influence around which bloom, ever fresh and fair, the full flowers of history and romance; but lovelier far than these are the palaces of love, the description of which would outrival earth’s richest romance. Of these palaces and dominions, where the king of love reigns supreme, neither eye hath seen nor ear heard. Oh, for a conception of them! Lovely realms indeed! Sweet to the soul is the overflowing melody of thy millions of golden harps! For a thousand years one would climb thy bright mountains, and gather the golden fruit in thy sunny valleys.

## CHAPTER XXI.

---

Strange, that so dark and horrid a suspicion  
Should rest upon an act so noble and humane.

---

WITHIN the next few days the public had gathered up some of the floating suspicions growing out of the fire inquest which connected Ford with the burning of the Lee mansion. These suspicions had at length reached Ford, in whose innocent heart they rankled like a bed of thorns.

Little did Ford think, when he rescued Grace, that he was to be so suddenly transformed by many into an incendiary with the flaming torch. With the knowledge that he was innocent, he determined to stem the tide of slander that was setting strongly against him. Often he imagined the eye of Carleton looking in triumph on his almost blasted hopes. Almost rejected by Grace on one hand, and suspected by his friends on the other, Ford felt wretched indeed.

Against the dreadful suspicions against him, the only proof he could offer, and which was in itself conclusive, was, that he was at home all the evening preceding the night of the fire.

Deeply affected in mind, he called on Grace to plead his innocence, and, if possible, to urge his suit once more.

Anticipating this visit, Grace received him kindly, and even by her parents he was warmly greeted, for in reality they entertained no serious suspicion against Ford. Seeing public opinion was rather strong against him, they resolved to stand by him, and be his friends in this hour of his trial. By this course they hoped to remove all groundless suspicions against him.

"Am I indeed so welcome, Miss Lee, when, in the sight of many others I am so great a criminal?" was Ford's first remark, as he took a seat beside Grace.

"I trust I am as happy as ever to see you, Mr. Ford, despite what many suspect," replied Grace.

"Thank you, Miss Lee. Your words are like rays of sunshine to me. Forgive me for thinking you would suspect me. I am here, Miss Lee, to avow my innocence, and once more to ask that the hand and heart I have saved may be mine forever. Refuse me not, if possible, Miss Lee, for I love you more deeply than words can express."

"Spare me yet a while longer, Mr. Ford, from giving you an answer. Think not unkindly of me, if you ask more than I can at present grant you."

"It may be then, Miss Lee, that you love another. Speak then, and tell me, and thus put an end to my hope or despair."

"Forgive me, Mr. Ford, for my inability to answer you as yet."

"Tell me, then, Miss Lee, is there any hope for me?"

"Some, perhaps, Mr. Ford."

"Spare me then some hope, Miss Lee, I entreat you."

I think sometimes you have those dreadful suspicions against me."

"Not at all, Mr. Ford ; not in the least. I do not suspect you a particle. You may rest assured, that my refusal to give you any positive answer, is not based on any such suspicions. I shall always be glad to see you whenever you call on me, Mr. Ford, and as long as I am able to believe you worthy, I will be a true friend to you. I would I could love you as well as you merit, but pardon me, if circumstances which may transpire, render my destiny otherwise. Pity me, Mr. Ford, if in my love I pity you. We may or may not be happy, as the future decides, and until a certain time, I can give you no definite answer to your suit."

"By your words, then, Miss Lee, I suspect that you love another."

"Supposing I do, Mr. Ford, what then? Know, Mr. Ford, that a woman retains the right to love whom she pleases, for love is a woman's free gift."

"I might as well withdraw my suit then, Miss Lee, and trouble you no further."

"It is at your option, Mr. Ford, either to withdraw or continue it. I trust, though, that whatever happens, we may remain friends."

"If you do not love me, Miss Lee, tell me so, and I will go, and return no more. Perchance my rival, Carleton, has already proposed and been accepted."

"Not at all, Mr. Ford, I pray you give yourself no uneasiness on that score. I am free yet to accept any one who offers himself, provided I love him."

" Ah, I know it, Miss Lee, I feel it, — I know you do not love me. Why need I urge you further? "

" Be not too quick to take an answer, Mr. Ford, where none as yet is given. Think me not heartless because I cannot give you one. I do not wish to trifle with you. Put me down in one of the dearest places of your heart, as your true friend. Against a sea of abuse and slander I will uphold you, and I trust yours is a heart worthy of being won, and now and ever Grace Lee prays for your happiness. Pardon me, if I can give you no more special encouragement." .

" Farewell, then, Miss Lee, — it may be, farewell forever. I go, and maybe I may not return. The many happy hours I have spent with you, memory only may recall. They are like sweet flowers which have faded suddenly at their bloom — fair hopes which have perished beneath the bow of promise in their noontide glory."

" It may, or may not be, Mr. Ford, that we shall love each other. Besides, there are others you may love as well. Love comes not always for the asking. It comes naturally, like the air, or sunlight. One may love another, though, and meet with no love in return. Pity me, Mr. Ford, if such should be the case in my own experience."

" True, Miss Lee, you have indeed spoken well and wisely. Pardon me, if I love you better than you do me."

" I do not blame you, Mr. Ford ; would I could love you more."

Ford, here turning on his heel, was about departing, evidently in despair. He hesitated though. He would make one more appeal.

"How can I depart, Grace, with no answer of encouragement from your sweet lips:" and, leaning forward, his head sank insensibly downward, until it rested, as if for support against the edge of the door, in utter helplessness. How long he would have remained so, Grace knew not, had she not, by gently moving her chair, startled him from his position. Unhappy lover he—as with one more passionate clasping of Grace's hands, and one more spoken farewell, which drew tears from the eyes of both, Ford departed.

He had earnestly urged his suit, and was disappointed and cast down as to the result. After his rescue of Grace from the fire, he had felt sure of success. But how often in this world is success blinding and deceitful. It was evident to Ford, that Grace had but little more than a feeling of friendship for him, after all that had happened so apparently in his favor.

After his departure, his first thought was to resign her utterly and forever. As he reached the open air, the cool breezes of the quiet evening fanned his brow, and low whispering voices seemed to try to woo him away from his troubled spirit.

"No, it is indeed so," muttered he to himself; "she does not love me. I will think no more of her. Fair image, begone! Let some grim demon from the lowermost regions of despair tear it away ruthless from my bleeding heart. Ha, ha! Do I love her yet? Begone the thought! It is not worthy of a shelter. Let it wander homeless and companionless, an outcast from the heart that once nourished it so fondly and tenderly.

Does she indeed love me? Ha! 'tis but a dream, emptier than nothingness itself! No, no, Grace Lee will never be mine. Henceforth let me forget her. Grant me, O Memory, this boon of blessedness, and I will ask no more. But how, alas, can I forget her? Would that I could. Would indeed that forgetfulness might stand in the place of memory for one brief hour, if indeed it would blot out her image forever. No, I will see her no more. Friendship! thou art but a broken reed, and a rusted chain. Bind me only to her by the ties of love! Failing in this, we must part forever! But how, alas, how can I give her up to be another's? Must it indeed be? Have I saved her from death for this?"

Thus soliloquizing, Ford wandered slowly onward, until he came to the ruins of the Lee mansion. How many pleasant hours he had spent there. In imagination there came up before him the splendid drawing-room, filled with beauty and elegance, and the soft, gentle picture of Grace's quiet boudoir, where she had so often received him. Happy hours! the sweet places where you once bloomed and flourished know you no more! Most earnestly Ford gazed in on the melancholy fragments of the once noble mansion, through which the wind sighed as if it played on broken harps. Mournfully he lingered among the ruins as if to find there his own wounded and troubled heart. And why should he not linger there, as if around a sacred altar? Here through the ruined and deserted rooms, Grace had floated like an angel of light and beauty. There where he stood as if in sackcloth and ashes, her footstep had pressed, and her voice awakened



the echo of music and song. Here was a smouldered relic of the piano on which she used to play, and there in its accustomed place stood the harp in blackened fragments which her fingers had so often woke to melody. Broken though were its strings as they rattled and moaned in the wind, and its charred figure-work seemed to Ford a fitting emblem of the funereal pyre on which his heart's hopes had perished.

The next evening Carleton called on Grace. Hearing of the suspicions against Ford, he inwardly thanked some unknown power for this apparent slight turn of the tide in his favor. This time he had found Grace alone, and he saw no objection to an immediate proposal.

"Grace, I am happy in seeing you alone, this evening."

"Why so, Mr. Carleton?"

Carleton almost started at the cold, business-like tone with which Grace replied to him.

"I have a secret to communicate, Miss Lee."

"One of importance, Mr. Carleton?"

"Yes, Miss Lee, a very important one. I indeed love you, Miss Lee. In my intercourse and society with you you have indeed won my heart. Does Grace Lee love me in return? Will she consent to be mine in exchange for myself?"

Just at this juncture, Lucy Ford came up the stairs, and bounded into the room. An impromptu remark almost escaped her, as, suspecting the nature of the interview, she was about to withdraw, when Grace recalled her.

"I was afraid to remain, thinking I might be an intruder, Grace."

"Not at all, Lucy ; I am glad to see you any time."

"Well," thought Carleton to himself, "I might be sure of some intruder. I have exaggerated my good fortune to believe that I could have an interview with Grace, free from interruption. Oh, these young ladies! they do unman a young fellow most awkwardly sometimes."

Thus Carleton ruminated, as Grace and Miss Ford ran lightly over local matters and general things. Awkward enough Carleton felt in this dilemma. He had made a love proposal which had unfortunately been intruded upon, ere he had received a reply.

During the conversation, Carleton felt the gaze of Grace resting upon him, as if she was reading his heart like an open book. Often he imagined her carefully composing an answer to his proposal in the serious earnestness which, despite the lively conversation, she at times exhibited.

The case Carleton had presented, Grace was in truth, pleading with herself. How could she give him any other answer than what she had already given Ford? It was impossible. Between the two lovers she must remain neutral. Loving neither, how could she accept one and refuse the other?

In most cases woman's heart is her compass and pilot. Wherever it points, there she voyages on life's sea. Fortunate if it guides safely into the harbor of happiness and love. Many, though, are the hearts driven on to the rocks and breakers of despair, where the siren of love sings her sweetest songs.

The visit of Miss Ford almost over, as was intimated by her making preparations to retire, Grace noticed that Carleton seemed inclined to stay, as if to continue their previous interview; but Grace, with a tact which was well-timed and effective, appealed successfully to his gallantry by simply remarking, "As the hour is late, Mr. Carleton, I trust you and Miss Ford will be pleasant company for each other home."

"Oh, certainly! certainly, Miss Lee," rejoined Carleton, suddenly calling his politeness to himself, and starting up suddenly, as if a new idea had struck him, took up his hat and stood ready to accompany Miss Ford.

As they reached the foot of the stairs, Grace seized an opportunity, and whispered in Carleton's ear that she would give him an answer to his proposal in writing, and send it to him in due time, which suggestion of course Carleton was obliged to comply with.

In their walk homewards, the conversation between Carleton and Miss Ford naturally turned to the subject of the burning of the Lee mansion.

"Well, Miss Ford, what do you think of it?" was Carleton's first inquiry.

"I hardly know, Mr. Carleton. I dare not say much on the subject. Poor Francis thinks the most about it."

"Why, on account of the suspicions against him?"

"Yes, Mr. Carleton, and that is not all. It is about as bad to be generally suspected of a crime as to commit one."

"Well, Miss Ford, I think your brother need not be

too sensitive on that point. The service he rendered Grace, which undoubtedly saved her life, would, I think, offset all such suspicions. What does Grace think about it, Miss Ford?"

"I have not heard either her or my brother say, Mr. Carleton."

"In the absence of any substantial proof, Miss Ford, such suspicions ought to be harmless."

In their homeward walk they had now reached the smouldered ruins of the Lee mansion, with the bright moonlight resting quietly upon them. All around was still. To the mind that is open to the influences of nature and art, there is something indescribable in the effect of wreck and ruin.

To look on mouldered piles and craggy walls, where beauty and elegance had had their home, and to think of the times gone by which were so fully illustrated in them, remind us of the solemn reality, that we live in a world which, from the time it swung out in beauty into space, has been continually passing away. From its beginning it contained the seeds of death and decay, for, did not the apple of death grow in Eden's romantic garden? Possibly the earth was formed from the wreck and chaos of another world, which, in its day, might have been far more beautiful. If we could pass on the wings of time from world to world, we might compare the wrecks of earth with those of its sister orbs.

In surveying a ruin, the interest in it arises from the associations connected with it. This was the case with Carleton and Miss Ford, as they stood gazing into the

empty windows and open doorways, and they could not resist the temptation to linger awhile.

How familiar it seemed to them, and what associations were awakened. Here the sounds of dancing and song had found human echo. Here beauty and elegance had swept by like a whirlpool of charm and magic. Here fashion and taste had worn their brightest jewels. In memory Carleton and his companion recalled the happy hours they had spent within those now blackened walls, and, with mingled feelings of sadness and regret, they turned away, while Carleton shrugged his shoulders, as if in response to the chill of the night air ; while in reality he turned a cold shoulder to the too warm-hearted demon of suspicion, which, despite his efforts, seemed to haunt him as its prey. Could Lucy Ford have looked in upon the heart of Carleton, how differently she would have thought of him. What ruins there she would have beheld.

But it is not given us to read the hearts of others while we so imperfectly understand our own. There is but one who can read hearts aright, for the reason that his is an all-seeing eye. The Infinite holds the key to all human hearts and languages. What matters it though Moses destroy the tables of stone. Human hearts are the library of the Creator, and in them he reads, as in one item, all that has happened on earth from the creation until now. In that library of the Creator, happy are those hearts which are the richest, and which occupy the upper shelves of heaven's book-case, like books which are choicest and most select, on the golden edges and shining margins of whose pages, the angels see the thumb-marks of the Infinite.

## CHAPTER XXII.

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No festive balls, no gathering parties now,  
But rustic peace and simple country life.

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AS it was now in the beginning of May, and the fine pleasant weather of spring approached, Mr. Lee not wishing to intrude further on his kind friend's hospitality, decided to remove to his country residence. In the mean time the ruins were to be cleared away on the site of his city mansion, and a new house was to be immediately erected. By Grace the change was indeed welcome. She longed to be back among the hills and fields where she could dispense with etiquette and display, and roam at pleasure among her old haunts.

To one who comes tired and weary from the dusty and noisy city, how sweet and welcome is the calm deep peace of the country, far away from the din and whirl of trade and fashion. There, among the quiet hills and valleys, the heart may ease its weary pinions, and, like a panting and hunted bird, fold itself to rest.

To the mind of the city merchant, engrossed in care, and worn down with labor, how often does the quiet country home of his boyhood loom up before him like a beautiful vision, as if to recall him once more to its welcome threshold, ere the grave claims him in the midst of his

days. In such a vision there is more truth than poetry. The city proves too often many a merchant's tomb. A little more gold, a few more greenbacks to buy a coffin and monument with, and pay the funeral expenses, is the actual plea of many, though they know it not. By this I do not decry merchants; not at all. I do decry, though, their sacrificing life to mammon and gain. A little too much care, a little too much weight of business on the brain, and life's creditor — death — steps in and claims the balance. It was never intended by the Creator, when he made man, that he should be a machine to coin money with. A little too heavy bag of gold, more than he could safely and easily carry, has often broken a man's back, and made him bankrupt for life. On the last dollar obtained, many a man has rolled into his grave. On such hearse-wheels many have been carried to their long homes. Such loved money better than life, forgetful of the fact that no money of this world is legal tender to death.

Whether these were the feelings of Mr. Lee and his family, as they took their quiet abode in the old country village, I know not, but all seemed to be much pleased by the change. As for Grace, she was delighted. The change of scene seemed to revive and animate her, and for a time she actually forgot that Carleton or Ford had ever proposed to her. She would often go out, and roam for hours over the woods and fields. Every thing she had delighted in was still there. Each favorite tree and knoll, each pleasant place by the pond and river side. Not a thing seemed changed.

"Here you are again, Grace," sounded a voice beside her, which seemed wonderfully familiar.

" Ah, Lizzie, is that you ? You almost frighten me."

" Well, Grace, you ought to have been frightened long ago. I have been out hunting you for some time."

" That is not saying much, Lizzie ; for you knew where you could find me well enough. Sit down beside me, now you have found your game, and rest yourself, weary hunter as you are."

" Good, Grace ; I think I will. But tell me, what or who you were thinking of all so sober, when I first saw you ?"

" I was thinking of the past, Lizzie. More than that, I have another love proposition on the tapis to whom it may concern."

" Who is the masculine of it, Grace ?"

" Carleton, Lizzie. Listen, and I will give you the grammar of it in good English. Carleton is a personal pronoun, first person, singular number, masculine gender, nominative case, and subject to the verb *loves*. On the other hand, Lizzie, Grace Lee is also a personal pronoun, second person, singular number, feminine gender, objective case, and governed by *loves*."

" Very good, Grace."

" What would you do, Lizzie ?"

" Now there, Grace, just as if you did not know what to do, without asking me. Besides, Grace, I have had no experience of that kind. Having had no love proposals myself, I can give you no special rule of conduct. Suppose I should advise you to accept Carleton ?"

" No, no, Lizzie, you do not mean that."

" There, Grace, I hinted to you that my opinion was



worth but little. The real question is this, — Do you love him enough to accept him ? ”

“ I cannot say I do, Lizzie. I am certainly in the objective case there. ”

“ Then, Grace, your course is clear. Tell him the facts in the case. Because he loves you, it is no reason you must love him. Which, though, of your two lovers do you like the best, Grace ? ”

“ Loving neither, Lizzie, there seems to be no balance in favor of either. As father would say, they are stocks at par. Besides, now that Ford and Carleton have declared, I can experience the effect two such love proposals can have on me. I count my heart as pretty safe. It is already cased with two proposals. Perhaps I shall have a heart full of them soon, so I can set up a love lottery and let some lucky drawer secure me as the prize. ”

“ There are many, Grace, who would enter such a lottery. You must leave room for that unknown hero of yours. You must give him a fair chance with the rest. The chances of your finding him are much against you. In order to put yourself in the way of success, you should make endeavors to find him. ”

“ Would I might find him, Lizzie, but where shall I go ? The world is wide, and there are many paths. Which way shall I turn ? ”

“ I’ll tell you, Grace. The coming summer I should start for Saratoga, Newport, Nahant, and other fashionable watering-places, and maybe, you might find him at some of them. ”

“ True, Lizzie, I was thinking of just the same thing

myself. I really pitied Ford, Lizzie, he pleaded so eloquently."

"How strong love is! How terrible a love disappointment must be! I hope you will not experience it, Grace."

"It is not given me to decide, Lizzie. We cannot tell beforehand what is for us. If our own will corresponds with the will of Providence, happy indeed shall we be. I will start off as you say, Liz, if you will agree to accompany me."

"Agreed, Grace."

"I told Carleton, Lizzie, that I would give him an answer in writing."

"Why so, Grace? Why not have told him on the spot?"

"There, I forgot to tell you, Liz. Just as Carleton had finished his proposal, and I was about to reply, don't you think Lucy Ford bounded into the room, and, of course, love matters were immediately dropped, and I was glad in fact that she came in just at that time, so that Carleton did not get his answer, but instead, had to act the gallant home with Lucy. Poor fellow! I am afraid he is dying for my answer, which I promised to send him. When he does receive my reply, he will die surely, if he is not very strong. I have warned him often, but he has not heeded it. How determined lovers are. I would not believe it, unless I was one myself. They want a yes always for an answer."

"When you answer Carleton, Grace, be careful what you write him. Examine your heart well. Don't make any mistake. Do not tell him you love him when you do not, or that you do not love him when you do. There are many such errors made which are never rectified."

“Your theory, Liz, then, is

Never tell a lie  
To tell the truth by.”

“Yes, Grace, that is the only theory that works well in love cases.”

“Suppose, Liz, I do not know whether I love Carleton or not?”

“Tell him, then, Grace, you are undecided, and to await your decision with gentlemanly forbearance. I think, Grace, you love Ford a little the best.”

“Not that I know of, Lizzie. In fact I would give something to find out myself, if any one can tell me.”

“I can tell you, Grace, which one of these two you like the best. You give Ford the preference. Don’t you think my judgment good?”

“The best judgment often errs, Liz, especially as regards persons. Our judgment as regards material things, though, is far better. We judge of material things so correctly, because they are inferior to us, and yet in them we err too often.”

In this reasoning, Grace was right. Mortals are but poor judges of any thing in the world around them. Some of the more gifted among us can call the stars by names which they have themselves invented; they can calculate the orbits and motions of distant worlds by their poor arithmetic,—in fact they can judge somewhat of the outlines of the universe, but to the inside of God’s creation no human foot will ever penetrate, for nothing finite can ever for a second occupy the space which can only be inhabited by the infinite.

Alas ! poor human traveller ! child of genius, and gifted as you may be ! The road to perfection is travelled only by one. Far away in the wilds of earth, from where Franklin rests in his Arctic tomb, with the icebergs for his monument, to the lonely tombstones in the southern zones, are the relics of those who trod various paths of art and science, but who never reached the main road to perfect knowledge, along which no tombstone of man is seen by the eye of the Infinite. In fact, not one human foot since the world began, however famous its owner, has ever planted itself within the imprints of the Creator's footsteps.

As Grace sat down in her cosy little boudoir to pen the promised missive to Carleton, none of these sober reflections probably crossed her mind. Without Lizzie's perceiving it, Grace had quietly sounded her as to which of the two lovers she preferred the best ; not that her decision would be allowed to influence her, but out of curiosity, merely, she had wished for Lizzie's preference. As Grace finished the letter to Carleton, Lizzie came in.

" Is it all written, Grace ? "

" Yes, Lizzie, it is finished. Poor Carleton, I pity him when he opens it. Lizzie, why were you never married ? "

" Well, Grace, it is the same with me as it is with a great number of young ladies ; they cannot give the reason why. Such a question, Grace, is very hard for single ladies to answer, especially those who have had no lover. If not for the single young ladies, I know not what the married young ladies would have done. "

" Then, Lizzie, you look upon single young ladies as indispensable. "

"Certainly, Grace, if not for single young ladies, I know not what the single young men would do. They would have to be a race of bachelors. To tell the truth, Grace, I shall have so much to do to get you married, I shall have no time to get married myself."

"Ha, ha, Lizzie, then you think it a hard task to get me married. Well, we shall see. I am going into town to-morrow to fall in love with dry goods, and this letter to Carleton I will drop into the post-office."

During this time Carleton was waiting with all a lover's patience. He began to think, that possibly Grace might have forgotten him. He had called upon her once since his proposal, and was not a little vexed to find the Lees moved from the city. His impatience, though, was ended, when he received Grace's answer, which, on opening, increased his vexation with every line, and which read as follows :

"DEAR SIR,—I have duly considered the proposal made to me by you some time since, and as I bear to you but the common feelings of friendship, I must decline your suit. Not loving you as yet, I cannot return the love which you have expressed toward me. I trust that, notwithstanding this, the same feelings of friendship may be still continued between us. It is with much regret that I address you this letter, which may cause you so much disappointment. Though I cannot accept you, yet remember that Grace Lee wishes to be your firm friend, and she will ever pray for your well-being and happiness.

"Yours truly,

"GRACE LEE."

"To GUY CARLETON, Esq."

Ere Carlton had read the whole of the foregoing letter, he grew mad and furious, with rage and despair, and threw it on the floor, and trampled it beneath his feet, while he gave vent to his feelings as follows: "Vixen! I scorn her! I trample her proffered friendship beneath my feet, as I now trample this letter of hers. I will see. Guy Carleton is not a man to be thus despised and cast out, even by Grace Lee, fair trifler as she is! Not by any means. But ah, what is this?"

Looking down on the floor, on the other half of the same letter sheet, was some writing he had not yet noticed. Taking the letter up again as violently as he had thrust it down, Carleton read as follows:

"Your proposal is accepted. An engagement of six months would be desirable.

"Yours truly,

"GRACE LEE."

Could it be possible that Grace had intended both letters for him, so different, so opposite in their meaning? one the Arctic regions of hopelessness and despair, the other, the sunny torrid zone of hope and love. What to make of this apparent eccentricity in Grace, he knew not. Should he go to Grace for an explanation? No, he knew full well where Grace had made a mistake, and he resolved to profit by it. Of the two letters, he would take the most favorable one to accomplish his purpose. Therefore, the better half of the letter he separated from the rest, and carefully folding it, laid it away by itself in his memoran-

dum book, as he did also the other, so that he could refer to them at pleasure. It was evident, that unless he pushed his advantage to the utmost, the letter was of no value. He could not tell with certainty. He must see Grace Lee immediately and ascertain the true state of the case.

It being a pleasant afternoon, the next day, Carleton departed, horse and saddle, for Mr. Lee's country residence. As Lizzie looked out of the window, she was suddenly apprised of his approach, and hurrying down to the sitting-room, she told Grace of the unexpected arrival.

"I've a good mind to go out back of the house and hide in the woods, Liz, and then you could tell him I was out. But no, I will see him. I suppose he has come out to have my letter explained to him, so he can understand it."

By this time the door-bell rung, and Carleton was ushered in, Grace advancing, with open hand and smiling countenance, to greet him. Here an idea struck Carleton. He would make it appear to Grace, that he had not received the letter she had sent him. This deception would give him a fine opportunity to personally plead his suit.

"I was despairing somewhat of hearing from you, Miss Lee," remarked Carleton, "so I thought I would come and see you once more."

"Then you have not received my letter, Mr. Carleton. I certainly wrote you."

"It is very strange, Miss Lee, that I have not received it, if you have sent me one. I cannot account for my failing to receive it."

Well, I sent you one, Mr. Carleton, as promised, and put it in the office myself."

"It is very singular, Miss Lee. But tell me, — were its contents favorable?"

"As to that, Mr. Carleton, I could not tell you. I could not tell as to how you would receive such a letter."

"Then, if I surmise aright, Miss Lee, its contents would disappoint me as to a favorable answer to my suit."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Carleton, and you must excuse me, if at present I can give you no definite encouragement."

"What, Miss Lee, is it possible you cannot love me?" inquired Carleton, starting as if a viper had stung him.

"It is possible, Mr. Carleton. Why should it not be? You have wrung the truth from me reluctantly, but it is spoken, Mr. Carleton."

"Can I not induce you, Miss Lee, to consider my suit more favorably?"

"In that I cannot promise, Mr. Carleton."

"Then, indeed, you love another, Miss Lee."

"Granted, Mr. Carleton. Perhaps I do love another, and that I have a perfect right to do."

"Pardon me, Miss Lee, but am I to hope no longer?"

"Forget, Mr. Carleton, that you ever loved me, or, failing in that, seek out another who can fully return your love. What, Mr. Carleton, could I be to you, if I loved you not? In any event, Mr. Carleton, let us be friends."

"So be it then, Miss Lee, — farewell. Broken hearts, though, are poor friends at the best," thought Carleton, in



silence to himself, as, mounting his horse, he rode swiftly away, as if anxious to get out of sight of Grace.

How gloomy every thing appeared to the disappointed lover. The pleasant landscape, the sunny sky, and the smiling face of nature, all wore a mournful look to him. As he rode onward, thinking of his last interview with Grace, he cared but little where he went. If his steed had borne him, like some demon of despair, to some lonely land, to be henceforth a hermit and an exile, he would have welcomed the change.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

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Down by the sea-shore where the waters creep  
In waves of azure from the emerald deep.

---

“DOWN by the sea-shore at last,” said Grace to Lizzie, as the former reclined on the side of a boat, with broad-brimmed hat spread over her lap, while Lizzie, standing beside her, looked down with pleasure on Grace’s sunny and open face, as she seemed to drink in with delight the scene around.

“Shall we take a sail, Grace?”

“If you please, Lizzie, and if you will work the oars for manly exercise.”

“Manly exercise, Grace — you well might say that. Would that some bold sailor boy would come along.”

“You remember, Lizzie, the piece of poetry we were reading the other day, ‘When our ship comes in.’”

“Yes, Grace, and by your sitting so composedly on that boat, I should think your ship had come in, and that you were sitting on the deck of it, back to its emptiness.”

“I wonder, Lizzie, if my ship will ever come in.”

“And with your lover in it, do you mean, Grace?”

“Yes, if it should turn out so, Lizzie.”

“Look, Grace, there is a beautiful vessel.”

"A steamer, Lizzie, from Europe. He may be on that."

"Very likely, Grace."

Here Grace would have started had she known that on that very steamer the young man in her thoughts was rapidly nearing Boston.

"I'll tell you, Lizzie," remarked Grace, resuming the conversation, "I would like to be on the wharf when the passengers land. If there was only a telegraph here, I could send out and ascertain. I shouldn't know his name though, Liz."

"Perhaps he has no name, Grace. You might inquire if, among the passengers, there was a very good-looking single gentleman, with no name."

"Yes, Lizzie, that would be particularly special, and exquisitely particular."

"You might give him then, Grace, any name you preferred."

"I think I should not have that privilege, Lizzie, for, if any thing, I should have to change my name to suit his."

"See there, Grace,—look at that pleasure party. What a gay trim they are in. It almost makes one realize the charm of ocean life."

"Oh, I think, Lizzie, that this Nahant is a charming place, so still, so pleasant, and withal so social."

"They are to have a hop to-night, Grace."

"I don't think I shall attend it, Lizzie."

"Why not, Grace? You will miss a good opportunity. It is as bad not to know that your ship has got in, as not

to have any come in. Besides, they expect you to grace the occasion."

"Why, Liz, because my name is Grace. Pooh, Liz, what's in a name?"

"A good deal, Grace, especially if you get the right one, and it belongs to the right person. Just imagine yourself introduced to your unknown hero, for instance."

"Enough said, Lizzie. My imagination being uncommonly good on that point, I will go. Enter Miss Grace Lee with a coronal of sea-shells, and a sprig of fresh sea-weed in her hair. Sentiment—imagination; emblem—sea-shell; signification—true to her unknown hero."

"Good, Grace, you will make an excellent tableauist. And see, here is some nice sea-weed, so smooth and soft, and withal so delicate. It will make a beautiful and fitting ornament for you."

"No, Lizzie, I will not wear it. I want no ornaments which the ocean has flung like chaff on the shore,—the cast-off trinkets and tresses of the syrens, I will not wear."

"I declare, Grace, you are getting practical on the subject."

"Well, young ladies, you are having a nice time all to yourselves," said a voice beside them, which, on their looking up to discern its owner, proved to be that of Mr. Ford.

"Ha, ha, Mr. Ford, so this is the way you steal on us ladies unawares, while we are indulging in gossip peculiar to Nahant," remarked Lizzie.

"To tell the truth," replied Ford, "I was looking

around for some stray boat, to take either a sail or row, and here is one that just suits me."

"I suppose you are willing to take some freight, Mr. Ford?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly, Grace, I was just about to invite you to a ride on the water," and suiting the action to the word, they were soon all aboard, taking a gentle ride around Nahant's rocky harbor.

At this time of which we write, Nahant, as a watering-place, and resort of city fashion, in the summer months, was in the full tide of popularity and success. The spacious hotel, the private cottages gracing the grim rocks, and withal, the many facilities and beauties with which Nahant abounds, render it a pleasing and delightful resort. Its bold promontories and rocky steeps, reaching so curiously out into the sea, strike the beholder with wonder, and he is impressed with awe and grandeur, as he gazes forth on the vast stretch of air and sea before him. There, at Nahant, those rocky steeps and craggy bluffs have stood for years, like the advance picket-guard of earth, forever presenting fixed bayonets to the onslaughts of Neptune, who dashes his azure-clad and white-foaming battalions against those batteries of ages in vain.

Ford, on learning that Grace designed spending the summer at the sea-shore, had, without knowing her exact destination, traced her to Nahant.

Before night, though, another arrival was announced, and the Carletons, together with their guest, Miss Lynne, enlivened the scene.

"So we are to have two belles this evening," was the

magic phrase which found its way around the famous sea-side circle, composed of those who, on the approach of summer, naturally take, like young ducks, to the water, while the advice given to young heiresses is, "look out for the sharks," — and generally, around sea-side resorts, there are sharks of two kinds. In other words, there the sharks of the ocean and the land meet together.

A goodly company of sharks and heiresses and belles, is indeed a blessing and consolation to those landlords who keep sea-side hotels. To speak to young ladies of sharks, though, they would declare them perfectly horrible creatures. On land, however, they are transformed into those nice, pleasant specimens of humanity, who frequent watering-places, and many in times past have been their victims. Of all, though, the foreign shark is the most to be feared, as he ranks high in title and nobility, the very sound of which, to many untaught ears, is like a distant jingle or the crown and sceptre.

That evening, in the glittering hall of Nahant's spacious hotel, beauty and fashion reigned supreme, while over them hung life's magic veil. By all, the assortment of Nahant's visitors was taken into account, and generally pronounced as a very fair sample for the season.

As for Grace, she was not pleased at seeing either Ford or Carleton there, and the next day she was among the missing, having departed early in the morning for Newport. Knowing that the Carletons and Fords had engaged apartments for the summer, she naturally supposed, that on her departure they would not attempt to follow her.

"You did not see him, Grace?" inquired Lizzie of her, as they drove away in their carriage to the steamer.

"No, Lizzie, he was not there. I do not think he will be there this summer; besides, he is quite as likely to be at Newport or elsewhere, as at Nahant, and I do not wish Ford and Carleton in tow all the time."

Great was the mystery the next day at the hotel, when the sudden departure of Grace Lee was discovered, and many were the conjectures hinted at to account for such a step; but both Ford and Carleton, as they exchanged meaning glances with each other, knew the real reasons. Carleton, as he thought over his last interview with Grace, felt satisfied as to the progress of Ford's suit. If Ford followed Grace, then he would follow, and accordingly he kept a sharp watch on Ford's movements. In the mean time, Ford, somewhat vexed at Grace's conduct, courted the charming society of Miss Lynne, who sought in every way to divert him from any thought of Grace, and, as an offset, Lucy Ford was always very near to Carleton, just when he happened to be most alone.

Though each lover made the most of his plotting, yet neither was disposed to be entrapped in the meshes of any other love, until they were certain what their prospects with Grace really were.

During all this time, Carleton had made good capital of Grace's contraband letter, until it was extensively whispered around that Grace Lee was in reality engaged to him.

This at last, reached the ears both of Ford and Grace. In a letter from Grace's father to her, the subject was

also mentioned, and Grace immediately wrote back denying the same. Not knowing the real source from which such a rumor sprung, the subject, after going the usual rounds of fashion, was dropped as a rumor needing confirmation.

With this, Carleton felt satisfied for the present, for the letter he would not produce until some decisive moment arrived.

Terrible and powerful is an unknown and unseen foe. In the hands of Carleton, the still strange letter was a mysterious enemy to Grace, which, in a rejected lover's case, he might be tempted to wield with fatal effect. In regard to such rumors as had reached her and her friends, Grace supposed, that after her clear rejection of Carleton, that they could not, with propriety, issue from him.

At Newport, Grace met with no better success in her mission. She met, though, with a promising young man, in whom she was much interested. An artist by profession, Frank Downing was of a poor but respectable family. In him all the fine feelings and nice sensibilities of art and nature commingled, and Grace found him a charming and agreeable companion, with whom she passed many a pleasant hour.

One of his paintings, hung up on exhibition to the eye of wealth and taste, had at once gained him fame and fortune, and a truly liberal patronage flowed in like a golden tide upon him.

With him, Grace wandered by the sea-shore, and many hours of sweet converse they enjoyed together. About Frank Downing, though, there was a melancholy and



reserve which presented a strange contrast to his other qualities, and which Grace deemed too delicate to intrude upon. Yet she sought in every way to draw him out of the cloud which, from day to day, he seemed to live under, and which, at times, influenced him so strongly as to make him almost regardless of her presence.

To counteract this, if possible, Grace made a peremptory request of him to paint her portrait, which, as a tribute of homage to his art, he accepted. In one of the cottages at Newport, Frank Downing had his easel and portfolio during the summer, and many a fair belle had sat to him for a copy of her beautiful features, to be transferred from the soul's tablet to the material canvas. But no such beautiful features as those of Grace Lee had he ever attempted to delineate and create with the brush of genius. As from time to time, at various sittings, the features of Grace grew into being from his skilful hand, their great beauty seemed to hang like a dead weight upon him. Why it was, he could not tell. "No, not for me," thought he to himself, as from time to time the beautiful countenance of Grace sprang into the full glowing lineaments of art.

"Why, how abstracted you are, Mr. Downing," observed Grace, as with hand and brush dropped by his side, and his head leaning on his left hand, as if tired by exertion, he dreamily surveyed the half-finished portrait of his lovely patroness, seemingly more like a spectator than an artist.

At the remark of Grace, Mr. Downing started not up from his reverie, neither made he any reply to it. Still

he sat listlessly and abstractedly, as if he heeded it not, while all the time Grace surveyed him with curious and intense interest.

"Dear me," thought Grace to herself, "I never thought an artist half so interesting and curious a study."

"Excuse me, Mr. Downing; I believe you are really wearied," remarked Grace, as a further incentive to arouse him.

"Perhaps so, Miss Lee. Perhaps I am really tired of my profession."

"What, Mr. Downing, tired of your profession, and paint such beautiful portraits and pictures as you do! Why, you surprise me!"

"Ah, Miss Lee, you may well be surprised, but think how poor art is, compared with nature; so poor indeed, that it seems but a mockery of it. Alas, all of art's products are but as gods of the heathen, — sweet eyes that see not, — ears that hear not, — and fair lips that speak neither the language of earth nor heaven."

"It is so, Mr. Downing, I will admit, yet there is much in a portrait or picture."

"True, Miss Lee, but before its creator it is dumb and meaningless."

"Ah, Mr. Downing, if that be so, how very poorly do artists prize their productions."

"Miss Lee, perhaps you misunderstood me. I meant to convey the idea, in my remarks, that it is from the appreciation of our friends that we prize our works."

"If that be so, Mr. Downing, you will not lack for en-

couragement in painting my portrait. I know perhaps what you might say, though."

"What, Miss Lee, that it is not so good as the original, do you mean?"

At this, Grace blushed and smiled, and dropped her eyes downward, as if to trace the delicate embroidery of her handkerchief which laid in her lap. Though Grace was much interested in Frank Downing, yet the interest she still had in her unknown heart's hero, was mightier still. Grace was still hanging her head, like the picture of modesty, hardly daring to look up, when Mr. Downing spoke again and reassured her.

"I hope I have not offended you, Miss Lee," he said.

"Oh no, Mr. Downing, not at all. I was only thinking."

Now Mr. Downing knew he had struck a tender chord in the heart of Grace, the vibrations of which he had witnessed both with pleasure and curiosity. He had spent many happy moments with Grace. Could it be possible that she loved him? Besides, he had caught the distant sound of the rumor of her being engaged to Carleton, and he had no reason to doubt it. He considered it also quite preposterous, that a young lady of Grace's standing, should be minus of a marriage engagement, while, in his companionship with Grace, he could plainly see a certain coldness at times, a peculiar strangeness of manner, from which his own reserve had sprung and deepened, and which Grace was utterly powerless to overcome.

"Perhaps, Miss Lee, I could paint you a portrait you would be more pleased with than this portrait of yourself."

"It may be, Mr. Downing, but I doubt it. Supposing I give you a commission."

"Agreed, Miss Lee, if you will find the original?"

"We both shall fail, then, Mr. Downing, I'm afraid."

"Supposing you glance over my portfolio, Miss Lee."

At this, a thought struck Grace instantly, and with eagerness she was soon looking over Mr. Downing's collection. Turning the drawings and paintings over, she was surprised to find one which represented in full outlines the features of her unknown hero. Could she be mistaken, or was it a delusion of fancy? No, it could not be. There was the same glance of the eye, the same cast of head and countenance. Long did she look at it. Secretly she wished to herself that portraits could speak. On it there was no name or superscription which told of its owner. After thus earnestly looking at it, which fact was noticed by Mr. Downing, Grace turned it over, and glanced at the rest of the collection.

Without inquiring any thing of Mr. Downing in regard to the picture she had looked at so attentively, Grace withdrew—the next sitting to take place the following day. If she could only find out his name and whereabouts, Grace would have felt satisfied. She determined in some manner to ascertain of Mr. Downing, without his suspecting the real object of inquiry on her part at all. Strolling along, occupied with many thoughts, she stumbled upon her friend Lizzie, who was comfortably esconced in a shady place, looking out upon the waves as they brought up their white crested chargers in line of battle along the shore.

"You are just the one I want to see, Lizzie," said Grace, as she took a seat beside her.

"What now, Grace? Have you fallen in love with Mr. Downing, or has he fallen in love with you?"

"Neither, Lizzie. I feel, though, as if I should fall in love with somebody soon."

"Ha, ha, Grace, just as if you had not time enough."

"I have made a discovery, Liz."

"What's that, Grace, a new recipe for making love?"

"No, Lizzie, no nonsense now. Sober down, do. I have made a discovery, and I want your advice."

"Is it all about your unknown, Grace?"

"Yes, Lizzie. Don't you think, I was looking over Mr. Downing's portfolio, and I came across the very picture of him."

"It looked well on paper did it not, Grace?"

"Yes, Liz, charming, I assure you, in these days of paper glory. Much handsomer than the prettiest green-back note."

"A handsome thing on paper, Grace, then. Did you ask him any particulars about it, Grace?"

"No, Liz, I thought I would not just then."

"He no doubt knows him, Grace."

"True, Lizzie, and that is what I wish to find out."

"I will ask him, Grace, all about it, if you have any delicacy on the subject."

"That is what I would like to have you do, Lizzie. If you will play that little part for me, it will be a great service."

Accordingly it was arranged, that the next day previous

to Grace's sitting, that Lizzie, together with Miss Granger, a particular friend of hers, should call on Mr. Downing, on pretence of seeing his collection of pictures and paintings, which exhibition was always open for all.

Arriving there, the artist being at leisure, received them most cordially, and took especial pleasure in showing them his fine pictures, and explaining their history and merits.

On turning around, Lizzie observed that Miss Granger had already stumbled upon the portfolio, and was busy in surveying its contents.

"Why, Miss Granger," remarked Lizzie, "that is Mr. Downing's private property. He will never excuse you for rummaging over it."

"Oh, I have no objection, Miss Granger. I assure you it is perfectly at your disposal," quietly remarked the artist.

"See here, Lizzie," at length sung out Miss Granger.

On looking, Lizzie discovered that Miss Granger held up to view the very picture which Grace had noticed the day before. This Lizzie knew, as she saw near the margin a piece of the paper cut out, the sign by which Grace had told her she would recognize the right one.

"A truly handsome young man, I should judge, Miss Granger," remarked Lizzie.

"Yes, Lizzie, unless it is some fictitious person, or some ideal of Mr. Downing's imagination," replied Miss Granger. "Do you know him, Mr. Downing?"

"Well, I do know him, and yet I do not know him, Miss Granger."

"Do you know where he resides, Mr. Downing?" inquired Lizzie.

"I cannot tell you his name or residence," replied Mr. Downing. "The circumstances connected with that picture are very curious. After I had taken a sketch of him, previous to making his portrait, he told me he was going to Europe for a year or two, and on his return he would see me. I think he gave his name as Dale; but I am not certain."

"Is he not handsome, Lizzie?"

"Remarkably so, Miss Granger."

"Almost every one who sees that picture shows great interest in it. I have but one other picture which will compare with it in beauty, and that is Miss Lee's," remarked Mr. Downing.

"But where did this interview between you and the young man occur, Mr. Downing?" inquired Lizzie.

"It was at New York," replied Mr. Downing. "I did not get much acquainted with him, as he started to Europe so suddenly in the next steamer. He paid me for the portrait, and said he would call and have it finished on his return."

"He is so handsome, Lizzie, I should really like to be acquainted with him."

"From all I saw of him, I should judge him to be a very fine young man, and one with whom any young lady could easily fall in love," smilingly remarked Mr. Downing.

"As the young ladies departed, Mr. Downing accompanied them in a stroll, as the day was fine and breezy.

With Lizzie's appearance and naiveté of manner, Frank Downing was much pleased. In the conversation in re-

gard to the picture, he was much interested in her, and, in fact, the interview was highly gratifying to each.

Many more interviews took place between them during the season, and Grace observed with pleasure the growing together of two hearts in love, — Lizzie being one of that class, who, without possessing great beauty of person, have much interest and attractiveness attached to them.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

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Here lies he cold and stiff, his sorrows over,  
Through him fate worketh wonders for the living.

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FOR the last year or two, Evan Dale, whom we must not lose sight of, had wandered over much of the romantic and historic ground of Europe. So much indeed was he taken up by his travels, that his matrimonial schemes never had occupied his mind to the extent of reaching any permanent result. From those who had temporarily fixed his attention, he found it impossible to make any choice.

This was owing to his being entirely American in his tastes and likings. Besides, he had not as yet met with the loving counterpart of the heroine he had seen in his beautiful vision. "No, not in Europe wilt thou find her," seemed a voice to whisper to him, and, on reflection, he was forced to acknowledge that the features of the heroine of his vision were, after all, truly American in their form and outline. Fully convinced of this, he resolved to start from England in the next steamer, which sailed the next week.

That very day he was wandering in a beautiful stretch of woodland, through which the setting sun looked the last looks of day, when he was surprised and horrified

at the form of a young man stretched out at full length before him. Softly approaching, Evan Dale stooped down gently over him, as if to arouse him from his slumber. In one hand of the young man was a letter bearing the marks of frequent use, while in the other was a beautiful miniature, which he had pressed to his lips, as if in the act of kissing it.

The attitude of the young man was so easy and natural, that Evan Dale's first impression was, that he was asleep. Failing to arouse him, he next felt of his pulse, and then he realized that the young man was cold and dead. As no marks of violence were upon him, Evan Dale concluded he had died calmly and easily. On the wrinkled brow, and the sunken eyes, and the haggard face of the deceased, Evan Dale easily traced the marks of sorrow and remorse, telling of a life, which, while yet in its prime, had succumbed to the effects of recklessness and dissipation.

Almost trembling with excitement, Evan Dale next glanced at the letter, and then gently disengaged the miniature from his grasp. Struck with surprise, Evan Dale was nearly overcome with emotion. "It is indeed her," he said to himself, and he was about to bring it to his lips, to impart a kiss upon it, when he started back in horror, for already upon it was the last kiss imparted apparently by the young man's dying breath, and which rested upon it like the damp dew of the grave.

But what should Evan Dale do? Here in truth was a dilemma. From the other effects of the young man, and his appearance and dress, he was evidently an American.

One might have supposed he had been robbed and murdered ; but in the young man's pockets a considerable sum in gold and silver was found, also some dice and props, and a pack of well-thumbed cards, which seemed to bespeak his profession. In his vest pocket also, was a gold watch of considerable value, which precluded the idea of his having been murdered from mercenary motives. The easy manner in which he was found, thoroughly scouted the idea that he had come to his death by violence. What to do, therefore, Evan Dale knew not. With the miniature in one hand, and the letter in the other, he seemed to be thoroughly absorbed in the fate of the young man. Looking, though, at the letter more distinctly, as if to gain some clue, he noticed the address at the bottom as follows :

"TO HARRY BROOKS, Esq., Boston, Mass."

Taking out his memorandum book, and setting down the address of the letter, and the name of the writer, Evan Dale decided to replace each article as he had found it ; and therefore the dead young man grasped once more the beautiful miniature he would never again see, and the tear-stained letter he would never more read with remorse and despair. Thus Evan Dale left him as he had found him, and immediately gave notice of his discovery to the nearest inhabitants, and also to the proper authorities, who at once took up the mystery.

Much interest was manifested by the public in the young man's history. The romance of the letter and miniature, and his being found in so romantic a place, naturally excited much attention and remark. Being laid

out as he was found, with letter and miniature in position, thousands came to view the young man as he slept so calmly in the repose of death. No one, though, recognized him, and apparently, he had in England no friends or kindred. It was decided, therefore, to temporarily inter him, while the news of his death, together with his effects, were transmitted to the American consul, to be sent to his friends and relatives.

As Evan Dale was well acquainted with the American consul, and as he was on the eve of departure for home, he requested him to take charge of the unfortunate young man's effects, and on his arrival home, to transmit his despatches, concerning the case, to the Secretary of State, and on the latter's order, to deliver the effects to the young man's relatives. This, Evan Dale faithfully promised to do.

On Evan Dale's thinking over the letter which he had read, he understood in a great measure the connecting link between that and the miniature, and he was much gratified, that at last he had found some clue to the heroine of his midnight vision. "But, supposing that she is engaged or married," queried Evan to himself. Remembering the date of the letter, his heart almost sank within him in despair. "Must I indeed lose her? Am I too late?" asked he of Destiny. But Destiny answers no questions put to her by mortals, neither does she ever lift the veil of the future from before their eyes. Destiny — good angel as she is — never betrays her trust, or discloses the secrets concerning us.

Half in doubt, and half in fear, Evan Dale returned

homewards, at times hopeful, and at times despairing of a successful sequel. On arriving at New York, Evan Dale took the train for Boston immediately, to find the whereabouts of the writer of the letter, whom he supposed was also the original of the beautiful miniature. Notifying the authorities at Washington, in regard to the young man and his effects, he took no further steps concerning him until receiving an answer.

Arriving at Boston, he vigorously commenced his search for his heart's heroine. In his search he accidentally stumbled into the Athenæum, at which there was then on exhibition a collection of paintings. Prominent among these, and attracting most attention, was Grace Lee's portrait, as painted by Frank Downing, so the index informed him. As his eyes rested upon it, he started perceptibly. In his mind's eye he compared the portrait before him with the miniature he had seen. It was no creation of the fancy. It was indeed the same.

Numerous were the praises Grace Lee received, in her picture, for her wondrous beauty. Lingered around among the crowd, who, with himself, stood enchanted, Evan Dale gathered up considerable information of Grace's family and history, and then for the first time he felt satisfied that there was some hope, and that she was still the Miss Lee of his vision. On recollection, he was still more surprised, when he found that the one who had painted Grace's portrait was Frank Downing, whose name reminded him he was the claimant of a portrait from the same hand.

Not knowing any better course to pursue, he resolved to call on Mr. Lee, stating the circumstances of the letter

and miniature, and thus secure a double object, an acquaintance with Miss Lee, and a clue to the young man whose romantic fate seemed to haunt him.

In this, though, he was directly thwarted. On calling at Mr. Lee's store, he was informed that he had gone on a tour of business and pleasure, and would be absent for some time. On inquiry as to where he might find the family, he was informed by Mr. Lee's book-keeper, that they were also on a tour of travel through the country, but at what place he might find them he could not tell.

Seeing no resource, he returned home to New York, and finding that Frank Downing was down to Newport, he started off for that place, in the hope of finding some further clue to Grace Lee and her movements. Arriving there, he sought out the renowned artist immediately, and requested him at once to finish his portrait, and Frank Downing gladly complied.

In the course of remark, the conversation naturally turned on the beautiful portrait of Grace Lee, and Frank Downing was greatly surprised, as Evan Dale put into his hand the duplicate of her portrait, contained in the pearl-cased miniature.

"Ah, what mystery there is in this world, Mr. Dale, and how wonderfully Destiny works."

"I see how it is, Mr. Downing; you are wondering at my possession of such a miniature."

"Ah, Mr. Dale, not only that, but the circumstances surrounding it."

"If you knew them, Mr. Downing, you would be greatly surprised. There is a mystery about it I myself

cannot fathom. Ah, Mr. Downing, you have seen her, and I have not. To behold Grace Lee once, is my earnest prayer. Would I might find her."

"Indeed, Mr. Dale, then you do not know her as yet ; but I see you are won by her marvellous loveliness.

"So much so, Mr. Downing, I have been seeking her these twelve months or more."

"How strange, Mr. Dale, and you have so far found but a shadow of her. As for me, I have spent many happy hours with her."

"What, Mr. Downing, do you" — Here Evan Dale gave way in despair and anguish.

"Now, Mr. Dale, do not be jealous of me, I beg you ; I was about to add, that I envy much the man who is destined to win her."

"Then by that, Mr. Downing, you think she is not as yet won."

"Not that I know of, Mr. Dale, although there are some rumors round that she is engaged."

"You cannot give me her present address, Mr. Downing ?"

"I cannot, Mr. Dale ; I could not say where you would find her. I can tell you one thing, though ; when Grace Lee was here, and looked over my portfolio, she seemed to be much taken by my sketch of your humble self, and since then she has made several inquiries about you, and apparently, she is much interested in your finding her."

"Indeed, Mr. Downing, you flatter me."

"Not at all, Mr. Dale. She would prize an introduction to you more than her weight in gold. Hearing that

you were from New York, she started for that place a week ago."

"Well, you astonish me, Mr. Downing."

"I'll tell you, Mr. Dale, I will finish your portrait immediately, and send it to Boston, and have it hung up by the side of Grace Lee's in the exhibition."

"A good idea, Mr. Downing. We would indeed make a romantic couple. I give you my permission."

As Mr. Dale returned to New York, he recommenced his search for Grace Lee, but with little success.

Wearied with searching to no purpose, he resolved to wait the coming of future events. Evan Dale calculated on the Lee family arriving home late in the autumn, to occupy their new city residence, in which case he saw no obstacle in the way of forming an immediate acquaintance with Grace.

While Evan Dale was thus resting from his search, Grace Lee was vigorously searching for him with as little success as Evan had experienced.

As for Lizzie, she wrote once in a while to Frank Downing, requesting him not to reply, as they did not stay long enough at one place for an answer.

Frank Downing wrote Evan Dale what little news he had received as to Grace's movements, stating where she was last, when he immediately set off, arriving there some time after Grace had left, and therefore not knowing what direction to take, he put about for home, much disappointed and vexed.

Thus Evan Dale and Grace Lee presented the uncommon spectacle of hunting for each other with no hopes of success.



Grace, in the meanwhile, the more she exerted herself, the more unsuccessful she seemed to be, and, wearied in turn, she resolved to return to New York, and call on Frank Downing, to see if he had any news of importance. In this also she was unsuccessful, for she found that he had that very morning departed for Boston. There was a glimmer of hope for her, though. He had left a note for her, in case she called, directing her to come immediately to Boston and see him, as he had news of great importance to communicate to her.

With a light heart, she therefore departed immediately for home, where her family were impatiently awaiting her arrival, preparatory towards giving the first of the autumn levees at their new residence, which, in taste and elegance, far surpassed its predecessor.

On arriving home, and looking at the paper, Grace's attention was directed to a paragraph Lizzie had discovered, giving a description of the two remarkable portraits at the exhibition of paintings, which read thus, —

“ On exhibition at the Athenæum, in this city, hang two remarkable portraits, endowed with youth and beauty. One of them represents Miss Grace Lee of this city, in all her loveliness, while the other, that of a young man in the prime of life, and not less lovely in countenance and form than its female counterpart, is said to be Mr. Evan Dale, one of the young merchant princes of New York.

“ To all who really love beautiful portraits, these two are worth especial notice and attention, and it is surmised that to them an intensely romantic interest attaches, suggestive of a still more romantic sequel.”

"Really, Lizzie, that strikes me as indeed romantic in the extreme. Destiny, indeed, is a funny parent, who plays strange freaks oftentimes for the benefit of her children. To think, Lizzie, that I should be hunting so all this time, and his portrait be hanging so quietly side of mine. It is indeed so strange, I can hardly believe it. That is what Frank Downing came to Boston for, I really believe."

The next day, Grace posted to the Athenæum to ascertain the truthfulness of the vein of romance the evening paper had indulged in. It was indeed so. .

There, in solid and massive frame, hung the counterpart of the portrait that had hung up in her heart and mind so long. A beautiful smile seemed playing around his manly lips, while the clear earnest look of the thoughtful eyes, bespoke the noble mind and the lofty intellect which dwelt within, while, with Lizzie, she stood with her eye fixed, as if entranced.

As they were standing there, admiring the two portraits, Frank Downing, the artist, entered, and stood by their side some few moments before they discovered him.

"Why, Mr. Downing," remarked Grace, as, turning her head to one side, she saw him smiling at her, "you really flatter yourself with such a display."

"Oh, not at all, Miss Lee," he replied, "the young lady and gentleman look finely together. They attract crowds of visitors every day, and many come a great way to see them. You can imagine yourself and Mr. Dale holding hourly levees at the Athenæum. I have something, though, Miss Lee, to tell you. I expect Mr. Evan Dale in Boston in a very few days."

"You may be surprised when I tell you, that he has been hunting as earnestly for you as you have for him, and, what is more, Miss Lee, he has a fine pearl-cased miniature of you which he showed me."

"I declare, Mr. Downing, what next will you tell me? I haven't heard of events so strange and welcome for a long time, and this you have told me is a deeper mystery than I can explain. You say he has a miniature of me, — you must be mistaken. It must be of some other young lady."

"No, Miss Lee, I am certain it was of yourself."

"Well, Mr. Downing, I am really dumbfounded. I know not how to account for it."

"However doubtful you may be about it, it is nevertheless true, Miss Lee."

"Really, Mr. Downing, I am suddenly converted into a believer of miracles. You would perform a miracle much to my liking, though, Mr. Downing, if you could tell me how he got possession of my miniature."

"I know not, Miss Lee, as he gave me no particulars. Evan Dale will soon be here to answer for himself, and then, probably, you will be surprised at the simplicity of the truth, and at the materials of which destiny makes its combinations."

"There is one favor I will ask of you, Mr. Downing."

"Name it, Miss Lee."

"That is, Mr. Downing, to bring your friend, Evan Dale, with you when you come to our levee, which will be just one week from to-night."

"I promise, Miss Lee. Mr. Dale, I know, will be but

too glad to come. That there may be no delay in his coming, I will write him immediately."

"That evening Grace Lee reposed herself to rest with a light and thankful heart. Though she had doubted much, it was now all clear. She was like one who, passing through a region of gloom, had suddenly emerged into the bright sunny valleys and plains of gladness and joy.

Agreeable to his promise, Frank Downing wrote to Evan Dale, and the latter made every preparation to immediately comply with his request; and the next day saw him in the express train, rapidly en route for Boston, where he arrived that night.

As Grace's time was spent mostly in preparation for the levee, it was deemed impolitic to intrude upon her, and Evan Dale was obliged to acquiesce, notwithstanding his impatience, in his friend's judgment. For the few days preceding this eventful night, Evan Dale roamed around, as if continuing still his romantic search, as if determined to catch a glimpse of her. Useless for him, though, was it to endeavor to forestall the favored hour of Destiny. Sufficient unto that hour is the happiness thereof.

How strong are the feelings of the heart when it has once set itself on a loved object. When love commences its worship in the human heart, it becomes at once a believer in the truest religion earth possesses. We often talk about religious denominations, and their various beliefs, and creeds, and theories, — we dispute on the great questions of theology, and quarrel over the sweet, touching words of Christ himself, as if thereby we were to attain unto the true religion. Sometimes about us float the strange

inconsistencies of heresy and scepticism, under different names and isms, crazing many, and imposing their gross humbugs and delusions on numerous weak-minded ones ; but this, nor any of these, is not the true religion. Ye who believe in any particular creed, believe me, the only true religion is "Love one another," for God himself is love, and by human love we enter the golden gates of love divine. In this religion Evan Dale was a firm believer. The next morning, Frank Downing surprised Evan by putting into his hand a nicely-folded envelope, with Grace Lee's card enclosed, and bearing an invitation for him to attend the levee to be held at her house.

"See, Evan Dale," remarked Frank Downing, "how different your card is from mine. Mine is engraved, while yours is written by her own hand. Do you mark the difference in your favor?"

"It is indeed suggestive, Mr. Downing, as you intimate."

"Your name is so precious, Mr. Dale, she would not trust it to the common course of procedure."

"Then you think it intended as a marked compliment to me, Mr. Downing?"

"Yes, Mr. Dale, I should consider it so myself, and all is, if you do not, I will exchange invitation cards with great pleasure with you."

"No, I thank you, Mr. Downing. As to your conclusions, you are probably right ; for your acquaintance with her may enable you to judge correctly."

Putting away Grace's card in his pocket, after imprint-

ing a kiss upon it, at which Mr. Downing smiled, Evan Dale took the arm of his friend in his own, and together they sauntered down the street, as if for a morning walk.

Suddenly, in the midst of a lively conversation which sprung up between the two, Frank Downing was struck with strange silence, his eyes and attention seemed to be fixed, while a spell apparently rested upon him, though he still continued to walk.

"Why don't you answer me, Downing?" Evan Dale inquired again of the artist; but no answer came.

"A walking automaton, — I shall have to shake him," muttered Evan to himself. As silence, still persisted in, seemed to give consent, Evan commenced to give his friend a vigorous shaking, together with some few friendly thrusts of the elbow near the vital regions, which he thought eventually restored Downing to consciousness.

"Why, what are you dreaming of, Downing, or worse than that, what are you thinking of?"

"I'll tell you, Evan. Do you see that carriage, at some distance down the street, approaching us?"

"Ah, yes, Downing, I see it. If my eyes do not deceive me, it is a splendid barouche, with a goodly span of horses attached to it. Was that what you were so silent about?"

"In fact, Evan, I was looking most intensely at the carriage, and all the time wishing my eyes were double magnifiers, so that I could make out who was in it."

"Well, did you really make out the occupant, Downing?"

"Why, yes, Evan, of course I did. That was the Lee carriage, and Miss Grace Lee was the lady within it."

"Would you had told me of that before, Downing. See, it has turned the corner."

"Why! what are you going to do, Mr. Dale?" asked Downing, as the former violently struggled to escape from his grasp.

"Why, Downing, I am off after it to get a nearer view."

"Why, Dale, you are like a madman. If you should run after that carriage the horses would take fright and run away with Miss Lee. Besides, she would not think any the better of you. Do you think that in such a way you are going to carry Grace Lee by storm? Not at all Evan, — be reasonable for once, do."

But nothing Downing could say prevented him from tearing away from his grasp. He was soon down the street, hard on the track of the carriage, as fast as his natural power of motion could carry him. "O that I was a locomotive," thought Evan Dale to himself, as he ran. Before he had turned the corner of the street, the carriage had stopped at the Lee mansion a very little while, and Grace had got out and entered the house, after which the carriage drove on, with Evan pursuing it at full speed, some distance in the rear. How much further he would have gone was uncertain, had not the carriage, just at that time, turned another corner, and disclosed to him the secret, that the young lady he was in such a lively search for, had, by some means unknown to him, vacated the moving premises.

“Fool that I was, to run after an empty carriage,” said Evan Dale to himself, as, panting for want of breath, he stopped short where he was, and from a due consideration of himself and his hasty services lately rendered, slowly retraced his steps, and resumed his morning walk, which had been so violently interrupted.



## CHAPTER XXV.

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Here, side by side in gilded frames;  
There, side by side through life.

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**D**URING this time the Fords and Carletons had been quietly spending the summer and early fall at Nahant.

Taking up the paper one morning, they were greatly surprised at the piece there inserted in relation to the two remarkable portraits at the Athenæum, and the secret point of romantic interest which it conveyed.

“What did you say, Lucy, at the last part of it?” asked Mrs. Ford, as her daughter finished reading the piece.

“I will read it again, mother, now listen.” “And *on dit*, a romantic interest attaches to them.”

“*On dit*, Lucy, what does *on dit* mean? Seems to me you ought to translate that into English when you read it.”

“It is French, mother, — It means, ‘It is said or rumored.’”

“But, dear me, Lucy! Romantic interest! What a world of romance we live in. I really feel that way myself. What will you give to be romantically interested, Lucy?”

"I can tell you better, mother, when I experience it. As you have experienced it, you should certainly be capable of judging of its worth."

"Poor Francis, I don't know what he will do when he hears of it, Lucy."

"He will survive it, mother."

Just at this moment, Francis Ford came into the room, with the paper in his hand which possessed the piece of romance his sister Lucy had just read. He was about to read it to them, when he was interrupted by his mother, saying, "Don't read it again, Francis, for mercy's sake! for Lucy has read it twice already."

"Well, mother, I was over to Carleton's, and Miss Lynne called my attention to it, which is the first I have heard of it."

"There is certainly something very singular about it," Francis Ford remarked, as he perused the piece earnestly once more to himself, as if his inner sight somewhat doubted his outward vision. "Really, mother, I must go right into town, and up to the Athenæum, and see for myself."

"Humph! A young man in the prime of life," muttered Ford to himself, as he took the road to the steamer at double quick, doubtful somewhat whether he was in an angry or a despondent mood.

When Ford stood, however, before the two portraits, his feelings can be well imagined. He seemed to be imbued with the romantic interest himself. The hanging up of two such portraits, side by side, was in itself somewhat romantic. Shaking his head as he thought over

his acquaintanceship with Grace, he seemed to himself in an uneasy and vexed frame of mind.

The Carletons were similarly affected by the two portraits, around which mystery seemed to deepen. But all inquiries proved fruitless.

"Dale and Lee, — two pretty names for a life firm," muttered Guy Carleton to himself, as he stood surveying the two portraits, which he evidently admired for their beauty, — the female portrait most.

"By the way! how pretty Grace's portrait would look hung up in my mother's parlor," suggested he to himself, as with an evil eye he looked on the portrait of the young man, as if to tear it from its frame.

The expectations of the Fords and Carletons remained on tiptoe, relative to the levee to be given at Mr. Lee's new house, at which it was hinted that some clue to the romantic interest of the two portraits would be given; and that the young man in the prime of life would himself appear. So much interest in fact did this inspire, that many of the invited guests actually forgot their diamonds and jewelry for the time being.

"Well, Francis, did you see the portraits?" asked Mrs. Ford, as her son returned, and threw himself down in a somewhat passionate manner on the sofa, while he violently tossed his hat to the other side of the room, where it landed in his sister Lucy's lap.

"Well, Francis, I should say, — I should think you thought I was a hat-stand," remarked his sister.

"Not at all, Sis. If you saw the portraits I have seen, I've no doubt, on your arriving home, you would have taken me for a bandbox."

"Well, what of the portraits, Francis?" asked Lucy, as giving her brother's hat another toss, it landed on the table.

"They are mighty handsome, Lucy, I can tell you. They beat all the portraits I ever saw, for beauty. You should go and see them."

In all his love for Grace Lee, Francis Ford had always been met with an under-current of mystery, for which he could not account. He had suspected her often of an interest in another, but what puzzled him most was, that he had no tangible evidence that such was the case. Closely he had watched for any rival outside of Carleton, but without discovering him. Before him Destiny still had held her impenetrable shield.

Oh the power of Destiny, — controlling human events and disposing human fates. In the battlefield of life, how omnipotent! Over human tears and sorrows and joys, and even over the cradle of life and the skeleton of death, the car of Destiny rolls in triumph.

Taking the two portraits into consideration, Ford was, as well as Carleton, utterly ignorant of the close bearing they had on their respective suits with Grace. Somewhat dubious as they felt in regard to the issue, they would have felt more so if they had known the truth.

When Ford furthermore ascertained, that the young man in question would, without doubt, be at the levee of Mr. Lee's, his heart almost sank within him, and, taking up his hat, he sallied forth to pay Miss Lynne a visit, which might serve as a tonic for his despondency. Arriving there, Miss Lynne was as usual rejoiced to see him. In

fact, she always seemed very glad to have him call. With her free, hearty manner, she more than counterbalanced the strange coldness and reserve which Grace Lee had so often manifested. Silently, but surely, Miss Lynne had been sapping and undermining Ford's love for Grace Lee. The warmth and earnestness with which Miss Lynne received Ford, on this occasion, disarmed him in a moment of all his despondency.

"What if I should propose to her now," thought Ford to himself, "and thus spite Grace Lee, and leave her out in the cold." Thinking just then of the portrait of the young man in the prime of life, Ford doubted much whether Grace Lee would be left out in the cold.

The conversation, after a while, naturally turned on the two portraits which had excited so much attention.

"I have not seen them yet, Mr. Ford, so I can form no opinion on them."

"What does Guy think of them, Miss Lynne?"

"I have not heard him say, Mr. Ford. Do you know whether Grace Lee is acquainted with the young man or not?"

"No, I do not, Miss Lynne. I rather think she is not, though."

"Is he so remarkably fine looking as they say, Mr. Ford?"

"Yes, Miss Lynne, I should say he was, if his portrait is any correct guide. Of the two, though, I liked Miss Lee's the best."

"Being somewhat interested in the original, Mr. Ford, it is natural you should. Now I should probably like that of the young man's the best."

"Indeed, Miss Lynne, I really believe you. It is most generally the case that a lady loves a young man the best."

"Especially if he is good looking, Mr. Ford."

"Ah, well put in, Miss Lynne, I declare." "I wonder if she thinks I am good looking," thought Ford to himself.

"Well, Miss Lynne, I see how it is, I shall have to fall in love with some young lady soon."

"You are already in love with one young lady, Mr. Ford, enough so as to admire her portrait, at any rate. You see I have to put you in remembrance."

"Really, Miss Lynne, I hardly comprehend you."

Seeing she had touched a tender chord, Miss Lynne desisted, and nothing further was said on the subject for the rest of the evening. With uncommon skill she had suddenly advanced on the enemy's ground to reconnoitre, and being alarmed, she had beat a precipitate retreat.

As the hour was late, Ford departed for home with somewhat strange and conflicting emotions stirring within him. As for Miss Lynne, she was much rejoiced at the turn love-matters were taking. She saw in a moment how both Ford and her cousin Guy stood in relation to Grace, and she felt assured. "I shall certainly win Ford," she remarked to herself, as she retired to rest.

In fact, if both the lovers of Grace had felt as happy that night as did Miss Lynne, they would have slept much sounder, and dreamed far happier dreams.

Notwithstanding all that had occurred, neither Ford nor Carleton had any idea of giving up Grace Lee. Each was still as sanguine of winning her as ever. The fact of a

young man's portrait being hung up beside hers, was no reason why they should resign her on such a strange pretext. Carleton, though, of the two, felt more anxious in regard to her, as he had received a direct refusal from her, which he in vain strove to construe into an acceptance.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

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In person fair, in mind most lovely.

Not in the crowded halls where fashion meets,  
And dance and music charm the evening hour  
Shalt thou behold her first.

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THE eventful evening which was to mark an important era in the personal history of two lives, had arrived. The guests were all assembled with some few important exceptions.

Grace having gone out in her carriage that afternoon, had not yet arrived, and some little surprise was manifested at her absence. Mr. Dale also had not yet appeared, to answer in person to the many inquiries for him.

In fact, both Carleton and Ford, who were early on the ground, secretly hoped that the injunction of time upon the young man would be perpetual, and his absence confirmed.

But destiny stays not in all its courses for human wishes or human fears. At its given time and signal, the actors file into their places, and perform the parts assigned to them, often with a coolness and sang-froid which seems to many remarkable.

To account for Grace's absence at so important a time,



it will be necessary here to relate an incident which happened to her.

On riding rather swiftly home, just at dusk, her carriage, on turning the corner, accidentally knocked down a little boy, and would have run over him, but for the presence of mind of a gentleman passing by, who, seizing the boy, rescued him from further danger. A cut on the head, however, which the boy received when he fell, needed immediate attention, as it bled profusely, and the little sufferer seemed fainting.

So soon as the accident happened, Grace stopped her carriage, and the boy was carried immediately into the nearest house. Seeing that he was fainting and insensible, Grace, who fortunately had in her pocket a smelling bottle, handed it to the gentleman, and by its means, together with bathing his head and face in cold water, and applying other restoratives, the boy was soon restored to consciousness, after which there remained nothing else to do but to dress and bind up the wound, which was soon done, while the little patient prattled its thanks, and looking up in the anxious face of Grace, sweetly smiled, and held out his little arms as if to kiss her. The sweetness and beauty of the boy Grace could not resist, and stooping down and taking him up in her arms, she kissed him again and again, while he clung to her, as if loth to part with so much loveliness.

The gentleman, in the mean time, was regarding Grace with considerable interest. Hitherto the care of the child had so engrossed them, that they had thought of nothing else. When the young man, whose name was Evan Dale,

handed Grace back her smelling bottle, their eyes met, and such a meeting — so much surprise — so much modesty — so much loveliness — and so much happiness, that two hearts were lost in that wonderful meeting. It was indeed love at first sight. Neither hardly knew what to say for some few moments. The language of the heart seemed to have taken possession for a while of the powers of speech.

“Why, Miss Grace Lee,” exclaimed Evan Dale, as soon as he recovered his voice, “I hardly expected to meet you so unceremoniously this evening.”

“Indeed, Mr. Dale, I can agree with you there,” said Grace, smiling, while her cheeks donned a richer color under Evan’s ardent gaze.

After seeing that their patient had fully recovered, Grace took him into her carriage with her, in order to leave him with his mother on her way home.

As it was past the hour of the beginning of the levee at her father’s, and as some time had been spent in taking care of the little patient, and in finding out where its parents lived, Grace urged Evan to ride home with her, which invitation he was glad to accept.

Arriving at home, Grace advised Evan to enter at the front door, and, under cover of the attention his presence would excite, she would, by entering the back way, glide up unperceived into her chamber, to prepare her dress and toilet for the occasion, which little plan worked admirably, and in due time Grace appeared in all her loveliness. As she entered, her father at once introduced her to Evan, not aware of their previous informal meeting. As

Mr. Lee introduced them, Grace smiled knowingly at Evan, which smile the latter returned, as, taking her hand, he led her forth as his partner for the first dance, at the conclusion of which they retired together to an alcove in an adjoining room, and there, free from observation, some time was spent in conversation, which materially ended in strengthening their acquaintance.

Soon, however, Mrs. Lee entered, and urged them back to their social duties. Resigning Grace for a while, in the next dances in which they occasionally met, Evan mingled more freely with all. As much interest seemed to be manifested in Evan Dale as in Grace Lee, and as their eyes continually followed each other, there was no doubt in the minds of many that there was a romantic interest between them. In fact, so much interested were they in each other, that Mrs. Lee actually searched them out a number of times during the evening, for unaccountable absence from general society to the better society of themselves.

"Never mind, Mr. Dale," said Grace, "we do not always hold levees at our house, so that you may sometimes count on not being interrupted."

"Indeed, Miss Lee, your occasional society is more than an ample recompense."

"But tell me, Mr. Dale, Mr. Downing says you have a miniature of me, and I was wondering what strange chance should have put you in possession of it."

"If not for that miniature, and the letter I found with it, I should not probably have been here to-night, Miss Lee. In fact, I fear we never should have met but for these strange and fortunate agencies."

"But tell me, Mr. Dale, the particulars."

"That I will do, Miss Lee, or rather, here is a piece cut out of an English paper, giving a correct account of the affair," and, taking the piece from his memorandum book, he handed it to Grace, who, taking it eagerly, read its strange contents, — Evan Dale in the mean while watching her earnestly, at the conclusion of which, Grace asked permission to retain it, and show it to her parents, which of course Evan granted.

For some time Grace ruminated over the piece, regarding Evan Dale all the while with mingled feelings of silent joy and astonishment, and for a few moments not a word was said by either.

A pleasant picture this would have made for an artist, but the artist, Frank Downing, was too busy with his young lady friend just at that time.

"I suppose, Miss Lee, you think it almost incredible."

"I really can hardly believe it, Mr. Dale, but still it must be so. How curious indeed is the chain of circumstances which has brought us together."

"It is very strange, Miss Lee. The more I think of it, the stranger it appears."

At this time, as the company appeared fatigued, and inclined to rest after dancing, Grace was called upon to preside at the piano, which she did, and gave several specimens of her skill upon that instrument, which were warmly appreciated, after which dancing continued.

During the whole of the evening, thus far, Ford and Carleton had contrived several little plans to captivate the attention of Grace, but all to no purpose.

After Grace had finished playing, and while she was still seated at the piano, another opportunity offered, and the two lovers made an immediate advance, from opposite sides of the room, for the honor of Miss Lee's hand for the next dance. Not observing each other's efforts to arrive at the common centre of attraction, Grace was surprised by the invitation of both, extended at the same time. Looking to where she had left Evan, she observed that he was sitting alone, and as he was still a comparative stranger, she felt compelled to plead excuse from further dancing, and retiring to the side of Evan Dale, who seemed glad to be relieved from his loneliness, she remained with him a spectator of the few next dances.

"You do me honor, Miss Lee," said Evan, who had closely watched the whole proceeding.

"Why should I not, Mr. Dale? I noticed you were lonesome, and I am bound to see that you are as much at home as possible."

"You indeed flatter me, Miss Lee, to thus forego an excellent opportunity of dancing with two young gentlemen at the same time," remarked Evan, smilingly.

"That is not the first offer of the kind I have had, Mr. Dale."

"Indeed, Miss Lee, you are fortunate," further remarked Evan, his smile turning into a gentle laugh, which quieted down gradually into a look of incredulity, as to Grace being so much in demand.

"I can hardly help thinking, Miss Lee, how we have been brought together."

"What a subject for romance it would make, Mr. Dale."

"A good subject for a novel, Miss Lee, — admirable! What if we should read one of the kind, and find ourselves the principal characters in it."

"In that event, we ought to possess the copyright, Mr. Dale."

"Perhaps, Miss Lee. It might, though, be compensation enough to find ourselves immortal in the pages of romance. Think what an honor it would be, Miss Lee, to live and be admired in the pages of a Cooper or a Scott."

While Grace and Evan were engaged in this conversation, Carleton and Ford and their allies were unremitting in their endeavors to secure the attentions of Grace, but all to no purpose.

Seeing they were thus constantly interrupted, Grace proposed to Evan that they should join in the last remaining dance, to which proposition he assented.

At the conclusion of festivities, Evan was warmly urged to accept the hospitality of Mr. Lee, and make the Lee mansion his home during his stay in the city.

Thanking Mr. Lee for the offer, he felt it his duty, however, to decline it. "You must not think of it too seriously, if I do thus decline your offer with regret," remarked Evan, seeing that Mr. Lee felt somewhat disappointed.

"Let us see you here often, then, Mr. Dale."

"I will, indeed, promise that, Mr. Lee," said Evan, as bidding Grace and the family good-night, he retired to his hotel, and sought his pillow, to sleep and to dream of Grace Lee.

And, unseen by mortal eyes, the two lovers met together in the still, calm, twilight hours. But no words of love

were spoken, no troth plighted. In silence, in the stern hours of midnight, the two lovers met and parted. Beautiful was the place where they lingered together.

In the world of dreams, there is a place adorned with the most beautiful scenery. It is the Lover's Retreat. There, stretching far away in the distance to the golden horizon, spreads its smiling area of silence and beauty. A sun, more beautiful than that which adorns the natural world illuminates it, while its twilight hours are lit by stars more radiant than those of earth's evening tropic sky.

None but the most happy of earth can enter the charming precincts of this lovely place. No tears, or sorrow, or disappointment are there. All is lovely, and calm, and inviting. The beautiful trees, though, wave not in the gentle breeze, neither do the birds of lively plumage, which fill them, sing. There the bright streams reflect, like enchanted mirrors, the charming scenery around, but they flow not. There, sweet flowers, unwatered by the tears of earth or the dew of heaven, bloom in surpassing profusion. All is serenity and stillness, where, in the land of dreams, true lovers meet and wander. Not even the angels or the favored of heaven enter the consecrated spot. Sweet, indeed, are dreams of those we love. Beautiful to true lovers, over the dark valleys and Pisgah tops of sleep, dawns the world of vision, which to them has a peculiar charm.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

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Put this and that together, and how strange;  
Truly doth fate work wonders.

---

THE next day there was considerable gossip and rumor in regard to the festival of the preceding night.

With the manners and appearance of Evan Dale all seemed delighted, and so general was the desire to entertain him, that invitations by the score flowed in upon him from every quarter.

Grace also was considerably besieged by inquiries, as to the cause of her late arrival at the party, and as she related the romantic incident which happened to her and Evan, they were greatly surprised.

"Well, Mary," said Mr. Lee to his wife, as they heard of it, "such things did not happen in our young days. Such a convenient throwing together of two young people I have not heard of before, have you?"

"No, to be sure I have not. That was not the way young folks met when I was a girl," replied Mrs. Lee.

"However, mother," remarked Grace, "it was very convenient, for I took him right home with me in the carriage, and I could not help almost laughing right out when I was introduced to Mr. Dale, so soberly. The idea of such a reality occurring, after such a piece of romance, and



that is not all, for I have another nice bit of romance for you, which will surprise you very much."

Grace, here taking the newspaper piece from her pocket, the very same which Evan Dale had given her, read its contents as follows :

"We learn of a sad, but rather romantic incident, attending the sudden death of a young man, evidently an American. Mr. Evan Dale, a young gentleman also from America, and resident we believe in New York, while wandering among the romantic scenery of Windsor, came suddenly upon a young man who was evidently asleep, with his hat off at his side, and his right hand pressed to his mouth, which held the miniature of a lovely young lady firmly to his lips, as if imprinting a kiss upon it, while the other hand held an open letter, evidently written and signed by the young lady represented in the miniature, and which letter the young man had evidently been reading, its contents containing a last sad farewell from the young lady to the young man, who, by his dissipation and bad habits, had nonsuited himself in love. It was, however, the last time the unhappy young man should ever read the tear-stained letter, or look on the sweet face in the miniature, for, on Mr. Dale approaching, and trying in vain to arouse him, he found that the young man was, in reality, cold and dead. On looking at the address of the letter, there is no doubt that the young man's name is Harry Brooks, hailing from Massachusetts, where probably his parents and friends still reside. His remains have been temporarily interred here, until word arrives as to their further disposal, while his effects have been put, by

the American Consul, in the hands of Evan Dale, for safe transmission to his friends."

"How sadly romantic," remarked Mrs. Lee, as Grace finished reading. "It is indeed almost too sad to be so romantic."

"Only think, mother, if not for this occurrence, Evan Dale says he should probably not have been here last evening. You remember, father, the young man who rescued me in the river when skating."

"Oh yes, Grace, I remember. It was the one I rescued afterwards. I was trying to think first who it could be that had a miniature of you. I recollect perfectly now. In escaping from him, Grace, you evidently took a direct road to the acquaintance of Evan Dale. But how are your young friends, Ford and Carleton? Don't you begin to pity them, Grace?"

"Not that I know of, father. I guess they can pity themselves."

Agreeably to Grace's expectations, Evan Dale called upon her in the afternoon, and never was meeting between two lovers so loving and sociable. Swiftly the hours flew by in sweet converse, and more remained unsaid than spoken.

"Do let me hear you play some of your favorite pieces, Miss Lee; you play them so well," said Evan Dale, adding compliment to his request.

"Certainly, Mr. Dale, I cannot refuse you," said Grace, as she moved to the piano, while Evan turned over the pages for her.

"Do you sing, Mr. Dale?" inquired Grace.

“ Oh yes, Miss Lee, I play and sing too.”

Thus happily and pleasantly the time passed away, until the supper bell announced the tea-table ready and waiting to receive its guests.

After tea, the time was spent mostly in the games of whist and euchre. Evan and Grace being partners against Lizzie and Mr. Lee, while Mrs. Lee sat quietly by, observing closely the play and manner of Mr. Dale, around whom there seemed to cling a peculiar and irresistible fascination, so much so, that she wondered not at Grace's enthusiasm over her attainment of his acquaintance and society. Often, during the game, the eyes of Evan and Grace met each other, as they played the delightful game of love, in which hearts are the only trumps.

In the game of love, a heart is the high trump-ace of whist, the right bower of euchre, and the queen of chess, so that often, with the whole world against it, a strong, loving heart trumps, euchres, and checkmates its powerful adversary.

On the morrow, as the Lees had planned an excursion to Mt. Auburn, Fresh Pond, and other interesting places around Boston, they invited Evan Dale to accompany them, which invitation he accepted.

Sweet indeed are the traps set for lovers, if those for whom they are intended, willingly fall into them.

For the following day's excursion, the family carriage of the Lees was ordered; and Evan Dale and Grace, together with Lizzie and Frank Downing, four lovers in all, we shall say, was its precious freight, accompanied also by Mr. Lee. On the route a lively conversation

sprang up, during which Frank Downing laughingly asked Evan, if he remembered the morning he chased the very same carriage with Miss Lee in it.

Evan, laughing heartily at the morning exploit of his, begged Downing not to say a word about it, promising that he himself would relate it to Miss Lee.

"Do let him tell it, Mr. Dale," said Grace, "for my curiosity is all aroused."

"Well, go on, Downing. Do not make any addition to it, though," said Evan laughing.

The moment Downing began to tell the story, he was so convulsed with laughter as to be unable to proceed.

"What a hand you are to tell a story, Downing; I shall have to tell it myself, now."

Some time elapsed before Downing recovered his soberness, when he told the story of Evan's exploit with remarkable earnestness, which of itself was enough to thoroughly arouse Grace's humorous qualities.

"Why, Mr. Dale," exclaimed Grace, laughingly, "is it possible?"

"It is true, Miss Lee, however romantic it may be," replied Evan.

"If I had only known it, Mr. Dale, I might have appreciated your endeavors," remarked Grace, apparently much pleased at this testimonial on his part.

Meanwhile, the efforts of Carleton to make use of his contraband letter redoubled themselves, and great care was taken that the rumors should fly thick around Evan Dale and the Lee family, in the most positive shape, to the injury of the projected love-suit.

In this project Carleton's friends assisted him, and they would have been pleased to see Grace's prospects in a real love-match broken and blighted. Misled by Carleton, as they were, and some of them already slighted by Grace, they entered into a conspiracy to destroy the happiness of Grace Lee by one fell swoop. The letter in Carleton's possession was resolved upon as a base of operations.

As Evan Dale opened his letters one morning, he was surprised at discovering the contents of an anonymous letter addressed to him, which read as follows :

"I warn you, as you regard your heart's happiness and future welfare, to avoid Miss Lee, in whom you seem so deeply interested, as she has been, to my certain knowledge, for some time past, engaged to a young gentleman of this city. This I can vouch for, as I have seen Miss Lee's letter of acceptance of the young man in question.

"A word to the wise is sufficient."

Now Evan Dale did not think much of anonymous letters. After reading this letter, his first thought was, that possibly some one was endeavoring to break up the friendship between him and Grace. To condemn Grace on such slight evidence was impossible. On going around town, and mingling in society and among business men, the same thing met him. Considering Grace's position, he thought it not unlikely, yet he could not believe it without evidence. To do so, would be both absurd and unjust. Considering, however, Grace's pleasure in his society, and her evident freeness of manner, it might be, he thought, that she was too easy and susceptible in heart and character.

He had a great mind to destroy the intruding letter, but, on second reflection, he resolved to keep it, and, possibly, the handwriting would furnish him some clue to the author of it.

The conspirators, not content with this, went even further. A happy, but diabolical thought, struck them, by which it seemed that the destruction of confidence and love between Evan and Grace would be mutually complete. An anonymous letter was sent to Grace, of the same character as that sent to Evan, and Grace was much surprised at receiving it, which, on opening, read thus :

“MISS GRACE LEE :

“Dear madam, — I feel it my duty to write you a few words of warning, in regard to Mr. Dale, with whom you have been so recently acquainted. As I have received information which leads me to think that he will soon propose an alliance with you, I have felt myself bound to advise you, under such circumstances, to refuse him, as he has been some time engaged to a young lady in a neighboring city, who vainly hopes, perchance, in the promised fulfilment of his obligations.”

We can hardly imagine the feelings of Grace as she read this letter. Injured confidence and broken friendship in the foreground, with misery in the background, was the picture which a half-frightened imagination cruelly pictured before her eyes. Could it be possible, thought Grace, that so much of manly beauty should be a mask of the hideous deceiver of hearts? How to receive Evan at his next

coming, she knew not. She was reading the letter over again carefully, when the door-bell rung, and Evan Dale was announced. Hastily putting the letter in her pocket, she descended to the parlor to meet him.

Despite the anonymous letters, their greeting at first was heartfelt and cordial. As the evening advanced, a strange feeling of reserve was noticed by each in each other. The letters had given rise to a feeling of uneasiness which begun to be slightly manifested. Sad is it when between two young hearts, in the morning of love, creeps the chill, brooding shadow of suspicion and distrust.

Sadder, though, is it, when the happiness of two loving hearts is cruelly conspired against.

The first thought of Evan was to place the letter before Grace, and ascertain its truth. As he noticed, however, the voluntary reserve on the part of Grace, he desisted. In fact, Grace's conduct was as much a mystery to him as was the letter. Suppose she is engaged to another, thought he. Has she not a right to break off the engagement, and declare it null and void? questioned Evan of himself. Suppose the engagement was with me? — Ah, there's the rub, — Evan Dale, how nicely you reason to yourself, don't you? thus Evan argued the case with himself.

Why not show Grace the letter, Evan, and ask her manfully if there is any truth in it. Grace will not blame you, seemed a voice within him to whisper.

This, Evan at length decided to do, and he waited for a favorable opportunity.

Somewhat the same feelings operated in the mind of

Grace. Evan's parting with her that evening was more reserved and formal, than loving and agreeable. As no favorable opportunity had presented itself, neither had dared to broach the subject of the anonymous letters.

The two lovers sought their pillows that night with anxious and troubled minds. Not then did they wander together in the valley of love in the land of dreams. Lonely and sorrowfully their way for awhile led along by the dreary, desolate shore, and the bleak, melancholy waters, where the black raven of despair flaps his darkening wings, and the waves from the deep sea of Lethe sweep over the delightful dreams of love, and toss them as broken shells at the lonely wanderer's feet, which, to the sorrow-stricken ear, breathe no music from the ocean of hope and gladness, while the chill, dreary winds mourn and howl, and the desolate heart sighs to itself

Oh, sing me a song of the days that are gone,  
Of the years that have flitted by.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

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Yes, I was deaf before, but now I plainly hear  
Fate's inevitable answer. But who is here?  
A villain! Ah, 'tis the very man I want;  
It takes armed men to cope with destiny.  
Well met, a villain and a villain.

---

SEEING the course matters were taking, Carleton's hopes, which had striven but poorly to keep themselves up to the surface of acquiescence and resignation, now gave way utterly to a kind of despair, at times fitful and furious, and at times passive and helpless. It was a question which should gain the ascendancy over him, and shape his future steps.

He was indeed deserving of some pity on the sole score of being rejected, as what young man is not, who, having played the game of love, finds himself minus the only trump-heart in the pack, which, in his estimation, is worth the having.

True, Carleton was unworthy, but probably he was not more so than many who were never defeated in their love-suit, as they perhaps ought to have been. Under the wedding-dress, as under a beautiful mask, too many have concealed their unworthiness and unfitness for earth's sweetest happiness. Unseen by mortal eyes, the demons from

the realms of hopelessness have danced with joy around many a bridal altar.

Rejection in love often operates with curious and startling influence, as local statistics show. Its effects on the mind and character are many and various. Some recover from it very soon, and in a short time recruit their courage, and are ready to pop the same question again, making up for their rejection by an acceptance. Such as these are not given to despair, but float along in the sunlight over the changing waves of life. Not that they are the happiest, — not at all, for such look more to the surface and outside, which is constantly changing. True happiness in married life, as in other things, is like the wealth of the mine and ocean cave. These are unchangeable. Gold is gold the world over. The truer the happiness, the deeper it is from the surface, and the more substantial basis it has. But too many think they can catch happiness as they do butterflies on a fine summer's day, snatching at all passing varieties and flying straws.

With many, however, rejection in love is a serious matter, leading to events and tragedies of direst character. With how many a suicide and murder is this list dotted. I dare not dwell on the subject.

Having noticed already some of the effects which rejection had upon Carleton, we will proceed to the sequel resulting from them. If every thing had prospered with Carleton, all probably would have been well, and he would never have been laid open a victim to his weakness. But Grace had rejected him, and from step to step swiftly he passed on to attempted revenge. The preliminary

movements he had made, prepared him to strike the final, and, apparently to him, fatal blow at Grace's happiness. She had not only rejected him privately, but she had publicly refused his advances, and he felt hurt and angry, and nothing but revenge would quiet him.

As he was sitting brooding over his dark and desponding thoughts, out of which soon the full-blooded demon of crime and murder would spring, with a fitting accomplice to carry out his designs, Miss Lynne, his cousin, entered the sitting-room.

She fairly stopped short on the threshold, doubting much whether the young man before her, with haggard look, and ruffled, ragged hair, was indeed her cousin Guy or not. He was indeed changed. Not a happy thought was in his heart. Ah, Guy Carleton, the evil one has complete control over you! Never again will you know aught of happiness! Unhappy man that thou art! You are given over to Satan, yet you know it not! Take the last fond look at thy boyhood's early days of innocence and truth! Glance, if you will, for the last time at life's sweetest memories of the past! But you heed them not!

On Miss Lynne's entrance, Carleton neither moved nor spoke, nor made any gesture of welcome. In his case, he was in no state of mind to welcome any one. Only his evil and wicked thoughts were welcome to him in that dark hour, which from thenceforth was to rest heavily upon him.

For some seconds Miss Lynne stood surveying Guy, with a countenance, in which half-concealed vexation, anxiety, and painful curiosity seemed mingled. But Carleton moved not, neither did he recognize her presence. He

still remained with his head resting on his hands, and his elbows on his knees, with his eyes cast downward.

What can the matter be with him, thought Miss Lynne to herself; I never saw him so before. She was almost about to retreat out of the room, but, on reflection, she thought best to stay, and, if possible, recover him to his usual vivacity and good spirits. He might be ill, too, or laboring under some great depression. She was aware of how he stood in relation to Grace, but she did not exactly think that this was the cause of his strange conduct. She was determined, however, to break the sad spell, if possible, and endeavor to cheer and soothe him.

"Are you ill, Guy, or what ails you, that you should be so strange to me?" inquired Miss Lynne of him, thus breaking the silence.

No answer came. The same fixedness remained upon him.

"Guy, what are you thinking of?" again inquired Miss Lynne.

Not an answer came, and Carleton gave no intimation that he heard her.

How strange! I don't know what to make of him. I only wish I knew what question to ask him to get an answer, whispered Miss Lynne to herself.

"How strange you act, Guy! Why don't you speak to me?" exclaimed Miss Lynne, softly creeping up to him, and laying her hand gently upon his shoulder, like a comforting angel endeavoring to cheer a guilty man.

As he felt the touch of her hand, he started and shrunk back, as if fearing she would be contaminated by him.

For a moment his eyes rested upon her countenance, as if questioning whether she suspected him of his guilty thoughts, and then giving a shrug of his shoulder, as if to shake off her hand, intimating a desire to be let alone, he resumed his former position.

She was determined not to give it up so, however. Putting her other hand on his other shoulder, and leaning down over him, she implored him to tell her the cause of his despondency.

Growing impatient of her, Guy arose and shook her from him, and bade her leave the room.

"No, Guy, you do not mean it. Take it back. Are you angry with me, that you should treat me so? Remember I am your cousin, and, moreover, that I am your friend. There is nothing I would not do for you which lies in my power. Tell me, Guy, what troubles you? I know you have some great difficulty you are laboring under. Can I not be of some service to you?"

"No, cousin, you cannot assist me. Go, and leave me alone."

"Why not tell me, Guy, if it is not too great a secret? Perhaps I can aid you."

"No, cousin, you are of no use to me in this trial. Do go, and leave me, I beg of you."

"Pardon me, Guy, if I still linger. I see you are nervous and excited. You hardly know what you are saying. Calm yourself, and take a reasonable view of things. Because Grace Lee will not have you, it is no reason you should take it so to heart, and be so unhappy. Strive to forget her. There's some other one will love you better than she ever can."

"I cannot see it, cousin. But leave me, do. Where is my hat? One thing I can do. If you won't leave me I can leave you," and suiting his actions to the word, he brushed gruffly past his cousin out of the room, down the stairs, and out of the house, rudely slamming the front door behind him, and leaving Miss Lynne standing still where she had stood, weeping over his unkindness to her, and wiping the flowing tears from her eyes, for she had a kind and gentle heart. Well would it have been for Guy if he had yielded to her kind and gentle influence, but it was not so to be.

As Carleton went up the street he hardly knew which way he was going. He wanted to get far away from the city, into some quiet place, and there brood undisturbed over his evil thoughts.

A horseback ride he thought would just suit him, and, calling at the stable, he was soon equipped. By hill and field and meadow he sped, as if with the swiftness and lightness of the wind. Little he cared what became of him.

He was passing along through a lonely wood, when a man masked, and otherwise disguised, sprung out at him, and presenting a revolver, with the open barrels to his gaze, ordered him to stop, or he would fire.

"Shoot away, you villain!" growled out Carleton at him.

"I don't care if you do shoot me. It don't make much difference to me whether I am alive or dead,—do you hear that?"

The villain was evidently taken aback at Carleton's

sudden coolness, and he paused some time, as if considering him with a good deal of curiosity. But knowing his trade well, he firmly grasped Carleton's bridle, and demanded his money or life, in a very respectable, but decided manner.

"Which should you prefer?" inquired Carleton of him, while he fumbled around in his pocket with one hand, evidently wishing that, in place of the money there, he had as good a revolver as the robber.

"I do not want to shoot you, young man," replied the robber, "but I do want some money, and that forthwith."

"Don't you want to sell that revolver of yours?" asked Carleton, still fumbling around for his money.

"Come, young man, I am in a hurry; I cannot stop to joke with you. If I joke, I may joke too seriously."

"Well, you villain," said Carleton.

"Don't you call me that name," replied the robber, interrupting him peremptorily.

"Well, what may your name be, then?" inquired Carleton, as he put in the robber's hand some money to keep him quiet.

"Call me Garusha. That's my name."

"A pretty romantic name, really! Well, Garusha, since you will have it so, I will give you more money on certain conditions."

"Hang your conditions, young man; I want you to understand that I have pressing need for all the money you have about you. We will talk of conditions afterwards."

"Ah, that is all right enough, Garusha; but I wish you to render me an important service, for which I will reward

you amply, so that you will not need to go shooting travellers on the highway any more."

"Ha, ha, that is it, young man, then. Something more respectable, most likely. We are well met, indeed. Is the service dangerous?"

"Not very much, Garusha."

"Well, young man, since you have been so liberal with me in money matters, if there is any thing I can aid you in, I will do so. You are not deceiving me, young man, into any trap?"

"No, Garusha, on my word of honor, what I am going to propose to you is true and confidential."

"Well, young man, come with me to my retreat in the woods. There is a path there where you can lead your horse through, and hitch him, after which we will talk the matter over."

"Do remove that mask, Garusha, and let me see how human you look, now we are in the woods."

"Ah, that I will do, as you seem to be a respectable young man from the city. I think you have paid me enough to be polite, at any rate. But what might your name be?"

"My name, Garusha, is Guy Carleton."

"What, son of old Joe Carleton, who lives on Beacon street?"

"The very same, Garusha."

"Well, you surprise me, Mr. Carleton, really."

"To proceed to business, Garusha, I will tell you what I wish to come at."

"Well, Mr. Carleton, I am all attention, proceed."



"To tell the truth, Garusha, I wish you to put a man out of my way who is very obnoxious to me."

"How do you mean, Carleton? Has he insulted you?"

"No, not exactly that, Garusha, but he has hurt my feelings considerably."

"Why not challenge him, then, Carleton, and fight him like a man?"

"Ha, ha, Garusha, you well might say that, but it is not an affair of honor."

"Well, Carleton I am used to it. I have killed one man in self-defence, in my lifetime. You spoke of putting a man out of the way, and by that I suppose you want me to kill him. If he is not killed, he will not be out of your way, sure. But tell me the particulars. Perhaps you are a married man, and jealous of some old love of your wife."

"Not at all, Garusha, I am not married, and may never be."

"Happy man! Happy man, then, Carleton."

"No, I am not happy, Garusha. If I was, I should never ask of you the service I desire. It is an affair of the heart I desire you to assist me in."

"There, Carleton, I might have known it was some love matter, but leave it to me, I will take the responsibility. You will shift it from your shoulders to mine, while my conscience can bear it better than yours."

"I hardly dare tell you now, Garusha. I shall have to think of it."

"Well, as I hear the sound of approaching footsteps,

Carleton, I think we had better separate, and I will meet you to-morrow forenoon in the stretch of woods down on the turnpike below here, nearer the city, and you can tell me then all the particulars, and we will arrange matters satisfactorily."

"Well, Garusha, what time will I see you there?"

"Say eleven o'clock, Carleton, I am your man then."

"Agreed, Garusha."

Here the two villains separated, Garusha striking deeper into the woods, and Carleton mounting his horse and riding swiftly away.

Taking advantage of circumstances, Carleton had secured the highway robber for his accomplice, who would, as he thought, be a fitting tool for completing his dark and murderous designs.

Nor was Carleton wrong in his estimate of Garusha, for, in truth, he was deeply-dyed in crime, and like other villains ready to do any thing for gold.

On Carleton's arriving home, he avoided the company of his cousin, and retired early.

Sound was his repose, while over him the picket-guard of the avenging angel kept watch with their glittering swords.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

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'Twas in this quiet woodland scene  
The murderous deed was bred.

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AS Grace and Lizzie were taking their forenoon stroll, which sometimes led through the beautiful village of B——, they turned aside to a woodland not far from the path, where, first seeing they were secure from intrusion, the subject of the anonymous letter Grace had received, was brought up for consideration.

“ Well, what do you think of it, Grace ? ” was Lizzie’s first question, after reading it.

“ I hardly know, Lizzie ; what do you think of it ? ”

“ I thought, Grace, when you first handed me this letter, that it was a matrimonial offer from Mr. Dale, in which case you would probably have no difficulty in deciding.”

“ Not at all, Lizzie.”

“ This letter, Grace, may or may not be true, and therefore I should treat Mr. Dale just the same as if I had never seen it. You might show it to him, though, and see what he says.”

“ Shall I tear it up, Lizzie ? I am much tempted to.”

“ No, keep it, Grace. It may do you good service yet ; ” and Lizzie handed it back to Grace, after which the

two indulged in speculations as to their matrimonial prospects.

"I haven't any anonymous letters to show you, Grace, so you see I cannot return the favor."

"Has Mr. Downing proposed, Lizzie?"

"Not yet, Grace."

"I suppose you expect he will, Lizzie?"

"I cannot say, Grace. Neither can I expect uncertainties."

"Then you are hopeful somewhat, Lizzie?"

"Why should I not be, Grace? Most every young lady is hopeful of just one event."

"On that score, Lizzie, you make me out as hopeful, then."

"Certainly, Grace, why should you not be? You have had already several proposals, and in the case of one situated like yourself, there is always room for one more proposal as long as the time holds out. Perhaps Mr. Dale has heard the rumor of your being engaged."

"Think so, Lizzie?"

"Why shouldn't he be deceived as well as others, Grace, if he has heard it?"

"I would really like to know, Lizzie, where such a falsehood came from. I shouldn't wonder at all if 'twas some of that rejected Carleton's work. I would really like to catch him."

Just at this moment the figure of a single horseman was espied in the distance, rapidly driving down the road to the city.

"Why, Grace, I do believe that is Carleton now. Let

us get further into the woods behind these two trees, Liz, so that he will not see us. I would not have him discover our retreat for considerable."

Just beyond where they had sat was a dense wood of small trees and shrubbery, into which they retreated, where, seating themselves on the grass, they quietly awaited the arrival and passing by of Carleton ; for, in reality, it was him, and he had particular business that morning at that secluded place.

Contrary to expectation, when the horse had approached the path directly opposite to their hiding-place, he was suddenly stopped, and driven into the edge of the woods, and securely tied by the bridle to a tree, after which his rider leisurely took the very road Grace and Lizzie had taken, until he brought up and halted at the very woodland retreat Grace and Lizzie had lately vacated.

On hearing him, Lizzie was about to retreat further into the woods, but Grace, catching hold of her arm, held her back, and succeeded in quieting her, as any movement on their part would reveal their presence. Thus they were forced by circumstances to be the unwilling listeners at an interview, the objects of which were such as only demons in human shape could conceive.

On Carleton's seating himself in the woodland retreat, he took out his watch, and exclaimed, "The villain ! Is he not here yet ? It is past the time I was to meet him. Hark ! methinks I hear him. Yes, Heaven be praised, it is his step. How slow he crunches along. I should think he picked out particular dry leaves and withered sticks to tread on, by the noise he makes."

"Well, Garusha," exclaimed Carleton, as his footsteps neared him, and brought his ugly visage and rude form along with them, "is this the time of day you keep a gentleman waiting for you?"

"Well, Mr. Carleton, to tell the truth," replied Garusha, "I stopped on the way some time to take the life and confessions of a snake in the grass."

"That isn't the kind of killing I wish you to do, Garusha. Don't shrug your shoulders. You have killed a man before, so you are used to it."

"Well, Mr. Carleton, I am at your service."

"Pay attention, Garusha, then, and I will tell you. Do you know Miss Grace Lee, Garusha?"

"Yes, Carleton, my boy, I'll bet I do, and she's the prettiest girl I ever laid eyes on, I can tell you. You couldn't fall in love with a prettier girl."

"Well, Garusha, I am desperately in love with her."

"Ha, ha, Carleton. I pity you, then, if she don't love you. Why don't you marry her? Are the old folks willing?"

"The young lady herself is not willing, Garusha."

"Have you asked her, Carleton?"

"Yes, Garusha, I have. Don't meddle yourself about that."

"And why isn't she willing, Carleton?"

"That is what I am coming at, Garusha. There is a young Mr. Dale, I suspect, who is going to marry her, as she seems to like him very well."

"And probably, Carleton, she likes him better than she does you. A rival, then, he is."

"Just so, Garusha, you see just how it is, without my telling you."

"I see, Carleton, it is a desperate case. She will probably like him less soon."

"You know, Garusha, the Lee family are very wealthy, and any thing you are willing to do for me, which will result in my obtaining the hand of Grace Lee, I will reward handsomely."

"Name the sum, Mr. Carleton."

"Fifty thousand dollars, Garusha, if I marry Grace Lee. Remember the sum."

"Name the service, then, which you expect of me, Carleton."

Here a pause momentarily ensued, during which, Carleton seemed struggling in the strong arms of conscience, ere yet his soul rushed over the brink of the awful precipice of crime, fully charged with the thought of murder. As life to him seemed unbearable without Grace Lee, he saw no way of escape from the force of his guilty thoughts.

"Well, Mr. Carleton, what do you propose?" asked Garusha, somewhat impatient, and wishing to arouse him from the reverie into which he had fallen, and, during this reverie, Carleton's soul was bound and chained, the spoil and prey of the evil one.

"I propose this, Garusha," at last said Carleton, "that in some way you relieve me of this Mr. Dale, as speedily as possible. Serve him as you served"——

"Don't mention him, Carleton, for Heaven's sake! You unnerve me! I cannot bear the thought of it!

Heaven forgive me, and redeem his soul and mine, that in the better land of which they tell, we may meet as friends, dear and loving as of yore."

"You are getting religious, Garusha. Shall I send for a minister? As for the better land, Garusha, there is none. Dismiss such thoughts!"

To explain this somewhat poetical feeling which Garusha had indulged in, it may be proper to state, that some years before, he had killed his dearest friend in a moment of anger, and since then, remorse, and sorrow, and a life of dissipation, had hardened his heart, so that Carleton found in him too willing a tool for his desperate purposes.

If he could not win Grace, he would revenge his wounded feelings, and at the same time inflict an irreparable injury upon her.

"But hold, Garusha, you need do nothing until I see you here again," said Carleton.

"Why so, Carleton? The sooner it is done the better."

"I will see Miss Lee once more, Garusha, and urge my suit, and if unsuccessful you may proceed. Meet me here to-morrow evening, just at dusk, Garusha, say at six o'clock, and I will see you and give you my final instructions," said Carleton, and clenching his hands, and making a threatening gesture with his right arm at the same time that he waved a parting salute to Garusha, they both departed, and the secret interview, with its hidden witnesses, was ended.



Several times, during the interview, Grace would start perceptibly, and turn pale, and cling forcibly to Lizzie, as if for support. The fact that her lover's life was in danger, was fearfully impressed upon her mind. "I must save him, Lizzie," were the first words she whispered to Lizzie.

"Let us not stay longer here, Grace. Let us go. I detest this beautiful and quiet spot, now that I know it is linked with thoughts of crime."

"Let's not go that way, Lizzie. Let's go in the opposite direction from that which we came, for that path henceforth is a villain's pathway."

"It is very fortunate, Grace, that we were there to listen to them."

"We are able now to foil their plans, Lizzie, if the right method is taken. To think, Lizzie, that Carleton is such a villain."

"It is horrible, Grace, certainly."

"But we must save Evan Dale, Lizzie."

"In what way, Grace?"

"I know not, Lizzie. What method do you advise?"

"I will tell you, Grace. When we get home, let your father know all about it, and leave it to him to take what measures of precaution seem best."

"Agreed, Lizzie, that will be capital. After dinner we will surprise father with an attempted tragedy."

This conversation was carried on between them in a low under tone, each occasionally warning the other with an uplifted finger, and looking occasionally around to catch the first sound of an intruder. In this manner they left

the woods, and gradually emerged into the broad path leading to the car, which they took and rode homewards.

"I know not what they would have done had they discovered us, Grace," remarked Lizzie, as they left the car to walk the little remaining distance to the house.

"I shudder to think, Lizzie. We certainly ran a great risk. We must save Evan, now, by all means. How surprised Carleton will be when he finds himself foiled. To think he would commit such an act of crime, Lizzie. It actually makes me run cold, until my heart seems like a beating iceberg."

"How it will surprise your father, Grace, when he hears of it."

"Why, he will hardly believe it, Lizzie."

"I suppose, Grace, Carleton will soon make you another matrimonial offer."

"Which of course I shall decline, Lizzie, unconditionally, for who would have such a villain for a husband — the very thought of it is a crime."

"Shall you see Carleton if he calls, Grace?"

"I think so, Lizzie. If I should not see him, he might suspect something. Don't you see?"

"Yes, Grace, you are quite right," said Lizzie, as they entered the house.

## CHAPTER XXX.

---

Ah, unwelcome truth from truthful lips,  
Can I believe it?

---

AFTER dinner, at the request of Grace, the interview with her father took place. Grace related to him all the particulars of the secret meeting in the woods, on which his surprise was so great, as to almost amount to a willful unbelief of his fair daughter's word.

"It pains me very much, Grace. I did not think that of Carleton. Can it be possible he is such a villain? Is this the purpose for which he was so well educated and reared? It is stupendous! I can hardly realize it, Grace. It seems to me more like a horrible imagination than a horrid reality."

"It seemed so to me at first, father, but alas, it is true."

"I doubt it not, Grace. It is the most unwelcome truth I have ever yet believed. What would his poor father and mother think of their son if they knew it?—Their darling Guy, as they call him. It most unmans me, Grace, to think of it." Here Mr. Lee brushed away a tear at the thought of Carleton's crime.

"And you say, Grace, they are to have another in-

terview to-morrow evening at the same place, at six o'clock?"

"Yes, father, that is their appointed hour."

"We must save Mr. Dale from their plots, Grace, in some way."

"I expect Mr. Carleton will call on me to-day or to-morrow, father."

"Shall you see him, Grace?"

"To tell the truth, father, I am afraid to meet a villain."

"I would not see him then, Grace."

"That will not do, father, I must see him, or else he may suspect something."

"True, Grace, then you had better see him. We will take some precautionary measures."

"Even these may excite his suspicions, father, if too prominent."

"True, Grace, I almost dread to have you see him. I will remain at home this afternoon for your sake, and take the responsibility of the precautionary measures upon myself, so that when he comes, you can see him as usual. I hardly think he will attempt any violence. Receive him in this room, Grace, and I will fix things so you will be perfectly secure."

Grace had a rear-guard of defence, in the persons of Mr. Lee on one side and his stoutest man-servant on the other, who, at the appointed time, were to take their places behind the folding-door, and there, screened from observation, and still as marble statues, await the result of

the interview. The first ringing of the door-bell was to be the signal for all to resume their positions.

Fortunately the folding-doors hung on hinges, and swung back into the adjoining room, which fact enabled them to close the doors, and still render Grace perfectly secure, besides tending to remove all suspicions from the mind of Carleton.

The doors not being latched were left just ajar, so that in case of emergency, Grace, who sat very near them, could easily open them, and be free from all danger before Carleton could reach her. To appear more natural, Grace was to be busily employed in sewing, when Carleton entered the room.

With all these precautions duly taken, Grace awaited, with strange feelings in her mind, the coming interview. Nor had she to wait long, for in the course of an hour Carleton called. On his entrance into the room where Grace was waiting to receive him, he made a forward movement, as if for the purpose of shaking hands with Grace, but, as Grace's eyes fell, and she resumed her work, he retreated back to the first comfortable lounge, directly opposite Grace, inwardly cursing needle-work, and wishing there was no such drudgery as sewing for womankind in existence.

"You see I am industrious, Mr. Carleton," Grace laconically remarked.

"Ah yes, Miss Lee, I perceive you are very industrious. I think you would make a very fair seamstress," replied Carleton, laying a little emphasis on the word fair, as he spoke it.

"You would recommend me as such, then, Mr. Carleton."

"Certainly, Miss Lee, I would guarantee your filling any position" [even that of my wife], Carleton was about to add. "I have come, though, Miss Lee, to ask you once more to fill a certain position."

"That of your wife I presume, Mr. Carleton."

"Yes, Miss Lee, you have presumed correctly. You know not how much I love you, Miss Lee; I am here once more to avow it."

"You well know, Mr. Carleton, that I can never love you enough to repay you even for your request."

"Is there no hope, then, Miss Lee, but in rejection?"

"I am sorry, Mr. Carleton, but not even your words of love or despair can win me. You have asked me the highest and most sacred favor a man can ask, and claiming woman's noblest prerogative, I have, with regret, refused you. Ask any other favor which is compatible for me to grant, and I should not refuse you."

"There is no other favor I can ask of you, Miss Lee. If you cannot grant me this, I wish not for any other favor from you, neither do I wish even your pity or your prayers."

"I am extremely sorry, Mr. Carleton, that I cannot grant your request. Heaven knows, if I loved you, how eagerly I would accept of your offer. In that case, I could not be happier. And remember, Mr. Carleton, a woman accepts only where she loves. You would not wish me to deceive you, Mr. Carleton?"

"Certainly not, Miss Lee."

"Then you would not wish to marry me, unless I loved you, Mr. Carleton?"

"True, Miss Lee, but I thought my love might change your decision."

"Never, Mr. Carleton, never. I regret it, Mr. Carleton, but your love will never make me love you. Depend upon it, I can never be yours. Accept this, then, Mr. Carleton, as my final answer, and believe me, I shall never again listen to your suit, which I have honestly assured you is hopeless in the extreme."

"I go then, Miss Lee."

"Farewell, Carleton, let us part as friends. I shall always wish you well, and pray for your happiness and well-being. If I do not love you, Mr. Carleton, I know you will meet one that will."

"Farewell, Miss Lee. Adieu, we meet no more."

Here Carleton took up his hat hastily, and with anger and feelings of revenge rankling in his countenance, which Grace plainly saw, he departed.

"Is he gone, Grace," asked Lizzie, opening the door cautiously, and looking in.

"Yes, Lizzie, he has gone to return no more. His eloquence could not persuade me. I wonder, though, where Evan is. I was expecting he would call before this."

"How strange, Grace, that you should have to refuse Carleton so many times."

"His love, Lizzie, could not take no for an answer. I shudder to think what a dreadful thing it is to love, and not be loved in return. I don't wonder it leads so many

into insanity and the commission of awful crimes. But hark ! There's the door-bell ringing — that is Evan, now, I'll warrant." And Grace, running down stairs, was just in time to receive Evan Dale in the parlor.

On his entrance, Grace thought he never looked handsomer ; and as Evan advanced to clasp her outstretched hand, he probably thought the same of Grace. He would, in fact, have liked to added a kiss to his customary salute, but he hardly dared to, while Grace, no doubt, would have highly prized such an affectionate salutation. She probably thought some other time would do as well, and then Evan could not help from kissing her ; and if so, Grace was probably obliged to take upon herself some of the patience which originally belonged to a man the good book calls by the strange name of Job, since whose time, humanity has been more than unusually patient, and, in fact, his patience must have been an extraordinary inheritance to have endowed all coming humanity with it ; and, indeed, Job is the first person we read of who had any patience. When you are patient, then, reader, so that it seemeth a virtue, lift up your heart immediately, and thank Job for his legacy.

In this interview of two hours, both practised some patience in bringing out the subject of the anonymous letters. How long they would have remained a source of uneasiness between them, we know not, if not for a little incident which at last called them forth.

As was her custom, Grace seated herself at the piano, to entertain Evan by her singing and playing, in which he often participated.



"Who is the author of that song?" inquired Evan, after Grace had finished singing it.

"I cannot tell, Mr. Dale, as there is no name prefixed. The author is probably anonymous."

Evan started perceptibly. Here was an opportunity of presenting the anonymous letter, thought he. But if he supposed he thought so any more than Grace, he was mistaken.

Instead of continuing on in her playing, she turned around on the piano stool, and faced Evan, as if she was about to make some inquiry of him.

"What do you think of anonymous authors and productions, Miss Lee?"

"Some of them I think favorably of, Mr. Dale."

"But what do you think of anonymous letters, Miss Lee?"

"What kind of anonymous letters do you refer to, Mr. Dale. Those that affect character, do you mean?"

"Yes, Miss Lee, those that place characters in a less fairer light than what we would desire, and actually do look at them in."

"Unless they are true in the statements they make, they are worthless, Mr. Dale. I should lay the letters before the parties spoken of in them, and ask them the truth. But what makes you so inquisitive on the subject, Mr. Dale? I shall begin to suspect you have an anonymous action against me."

"True, Miss Lee, I have received an anonymous letter, which you may read, and then burn up, as I can entertain

no such witness against you." Here Evan handed the anonymous letter to Grace.

"I will exchange with you even, Mr. Dale. A fair exchange is no robbery, you know. Maybe you will be agreeably surprised and entertained, as well as myself," added Grace, as, taking from her pocket the anonymous letter she had received, she handed it to Evan, who read it with evident surprise.

"Now let me ask you, in return, Mr. Dale, what do you think of anonymous letters?"

"I can hardly answer that, Miss Lee."

"Have you not begun to believe in them yet, Mr. Dale?"

"I believe in their existence, Miss Lee. That is all the belief I experience in regard to them, especially these two, which seem to be a remarkable anonymous couple."

"I am very glad, Mr. Dale, that the subject has come up in so pleasant a manner. It looks very much as if there was a little plot to ruin our characters in the eyes of each other. I trust, Mr. Dale, that you in heart have not accused me of what the anonymous letter hints at. If so, Grace Lee, in her innocence, forgives you."

"Forgive me, then, Miss Lee, if I have ever doubted you. Would that I had, for it would be so welcome to be forgiven by you. But believe, Miss Lee, I could never doubt you on the grounds of what an anonymous letter might contain, and now that I have seen the letter you possessed, which is false in every particular, I am more than ever an unbeliever in such anonymous productions. I wonder, though, who could be guilty of such things."

EVAN DALE.

Thereby hangs a secret, Mr. Dale, which I regret seriously affects you, and even threatens your life."

"What, Miss Lee, you do not mean so?"

"Yes, Mr. Dale, it is true. Your life is in actual danger. Even now the assassin may be lying in wait for you. I tremble, Mr. Dale, for your safety."

"You alarm me, Miss Lee. You cannot, indeed, be trifling with my courage?"

"Not at all, Mr. Dale. I assure you, it is even so."

"I wonder, Miss Lee, how you should be the possessor of such a cruel and murderous secret."

"You may indeed wonder, Mr. Dale, but myself and my friend Lizzie, very fortunately, were the unwilling witnesses to an interview, in which, in case of a certain contingency which has already occurred, an attempt on your life was coolly meditated."

"What contingency do you refer to, Miss Lee?"

"I will tell you, Mr. Dale. You know this Guy Carleton?"

"Yes, I have heard of him, Miss Lee."

"Well, you probably have heard that he was one of my suitors, and you may have heard it rumored that I was engaged to him, but such is not the case."

"Then, if I understand you, Miss Lee, this Guy Carleton wishes you to marry him. The villain!"

"Exactly so, Mr. Dale, and not less than two hours ago, this very afternoon, I refused him finally, which makes three times I have refused him in all. I tell you this, Mr. Dale, in order that you may see just how mat-

ters stand, and in what way the sequel I mention is arrived at."

Here Grace related the story of her morning's walk, the woodland retreat, — the secret meeting, — the hidden witnesses, — and the promised future interview, and Evan Dale saw at once that his life hung in the balances of deadly peril.

"I know not, Miss Lee, how I can ever repay you for the important service you have rendered me. If you will accept me, and the love I bear you, as a reward, I shall feel happy and contented. With your love around me, Miss Lee, I feel that I can ward off any danger."

"If, Mr. Dale, you will accept me and my love, it is the only happiness and the highest reward I can ever seek for."

"This is indeed happiness, Miss Lee. I indeed love you with all my heart, and nothing shall ever separate us. Grace, you are indeed my guardian angel."

During this mutual confession, the chair of Evan, as if by magic, had transported itself to the side of Grace, and their loving arms were entwined around each other in tender embrace, while their lips sealed with a sweet kiss their devotion and love.

Such melting moments, when two human beings enter into the holy temple of love, where shines the shekinah of earth's brightest happiness, some of our readers may remember. How often memory reverts to them. Ye who travel along the pathway of life, over which the shadows begin to linger, — over which the darkness of life's later hours begins to settle down, look backward often to those

happy moments of the bright morning of love, and they will cheer you onward ! Weary pilgrim, look back once more, and yet again, far over the way in which thou hast come, and catch one more glimpse of those happy moments, and they will go with you as comforting angels along the bleak shore and dark voyage with the silent boatman !

Happy moments indeed are those, when two characters and hearts melt together into one ! Beautiful on the rough stormy ocean of life is the meeting of two loving hearts ! Ye who have not experienced this happiness, would that ye might !

With too many, though, marriage is an unhappy state of existence, a purgatory worse than the imagined one of the hereafter, where two characters continually grind against each other. Masses indeed are needed for the repose of souls laboring in this kind of purgatory. Of the numerous matrimonial alliances which have been made, how small is the number which continue on really happily. Show me one really loving and happy pair, over whom the sunshine of matrimonial felicity constantly shines, and they have truly drawn the great prize in the lottery of life. Ye who are unhappy in your matrimonial condition, look not too much around you, for the happy married couples are but few and far between.

Curious and strange, too often, are matrimonial alliances in this world, so that it is not to be wondered at that so few reap the intended good. Mark it, the only legal tender for a loving heart is a loving heart in return, and only when a married couple possess this, are they truly happy.

If they have every thing else but this, they are sure to be miserable.

Look over society to-day, and what incongruities and inconsistencies mar and deface it from this very cause. Come with me to one happy family, and it is like a fresh and pleasant oasis springing up in the desert. True happiness reigns there, because husband, wife, and children are all the true disciples of love. If husband and wife quarrel and wrangle together, their children will spring and continue in life, marred with the same deformity. The reasons why so many are unhappy in their matrimonial relations, are easily arrived at. One reason is, that the worth of harmony in character is not duly considered. What sometimes most pleases the eye will not, on a close acquaintance, please the heart. Too many are in the habit of wearing masks before marriage, to more readily secure life-partners, when, if they would only leave their masks off, and appear in their true characters, they would find more congenial companions. If there are any married couples who recognize the truth here, and take it sadly, but repentantly at heart, I trust they will excuse me for reminding them of it.

It might be proper to give them some advice, if they would only profit by it. It may all be summed up in a few words, and these are, — Cultivate love continually, for only from this can true happiness come. Neglect it not for an instant. Indulge not in angry words or acts, for you cannot recall them. Easy is the way of happiness, if ye will only walk in it. Love is a plant of heaven in the family. Tend it daily. It is nourished only by the

sunshine and the smiles and the warm genial weather of love. Let not one leaf or bud of it decay or wither, and over home and around the hearth-stone it shall bloom like the woodbine and honeysuckle of paradise itself.

On this construction of married life, the term of bachelor and old maid, applied to one of the single gender, is far more preferable than that of hen-pecked husband or scolding wife. An able philosopher of this day might venture to say, that if not for the unhappiness experienced in married life, but few would enjoy the happiness and freedom of single existence. Not so, *vice versa*, oh no, — not at all! We hope, however, that in future, married couples will live better from the advice given them by unmarried people. But as Morris and Campbell say, in their stump speeches, and with emphatic whacks of their umbrellas, which were taken out on a rainy day, — “To return to our subject.” “That’s so and more too.”

The parting, that evening, between Grace and Evan, the betrothed lovers, was particularly warm-hearted and affectionate. Apprehensive of Evan’s danger, Grace clung to him with true womanly devotion and love. Not without serious misgiving did she part with him that evening. One more sweet kiss and loving embrace, and he was on his way homeward. Forewarned is forearmed, and ere Evan departed, the revolver of Mr. Lee, fully loaded, was handed him by Grace, to use in his self-defence. Hallowed indeed was that weapon of death to Evan, for the print of Grace’s tender hands, as she gave it to him at love’s parting, rested upon it like a charm of assurance and safety. On the dial of time, though, the hour had

not yet come, and without molestation Evan reached his hotel, and laying the revolver under his pillow, retired to rest.

It was arranged that Evan should call the next day at Mr. Lee's, and, together with Grace and her father and Lizzie, and a couple of detective police officers, proceed to the place of the secret interview between Carleton and Garusha, and be the witnesses of the final meeting between them.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

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At sunset hour they met and parted  
For the last time.

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PROMPT to the time, Carleton and his accomplice met according to appointment. The unseen witnesses were also there.

"Well, Carleton, my boy! how does your heart beat?" inquired Garusha, as they entered the woodland enclosure.

"Rejected, Garusha," replied Carleton, walking to and fro in a troubled manner.

"Indeed, Carleton, you don't mean it? It is rather hard for a tender-hearted fellow like you."

"That's the fact, Garusha; it actually makes me hard-hearted."

"Then she did not love you enough, Carleton."

"Not at all, Garusha. She did not have a spark of love for me. I see how it is. She loves somebody else, and I'll be blasted if I let that fellow, Dale, step in so quietly between me and her. I would rather have him step into the next world."

"What course will you take, Carleton?"

"Shoot the rascal, Garusha, wherever you can find him."

"Not in the daytime, Carleton."

"Shoot him in the night, Garusha, and see that he escapes not. Be sure of your mark when you sight him. You know he boards at B—— Hotel, and you can easily strike his trail, and bring him down. Here, Garusha, take this purse of gold; it will buy you plenty of powder and ammunition. I shall expect some morning to read in the papers the particulars of a little shooting affair, resulting in a tragedy. I shall then be amply revenged on Grace Lee for her refusal of me. Do it secretly, now, Garusha, and see that your movements are well covered, so as to prevent your being surprised in the execution of them, or else you may get executed instead of them. Farewell, Garusha. It may be forever. If you shoot Evan Dale, take the next steamer for Europe, or the high road to Canada, and if you are in need of any thing, write me. It will be very opportune and convenient for me to act as a comforting friend to Grace after the loss of her lover."

"A good deal you will console her," thought Garusha to himself, as he stood for a moment, like a statue, contemplating Carleton; then turning and waving his hand, as a parting token, he was soon lost in the distance, while the pathway of his retreating footsteps seemed like a trail of the black angel of death, winding darkly through the quiet woods amid the gathering night. Thus Carleton and Garusha, the criminal and his accomplice, parted to meet no more.

After Garusha's departure, Carleton sat down on a woodland mound, and, burying his face in his hands, seemed the very picture of haggard and desperate despair.

Even Grace Lee pitied him, while the tears ran down her cheeks as she thought of his crime.

"I would it were not so," soliloquized Carleton to himself. "Oh, how I love that girl. My love for her has led me to this great crime. It matters not, though. Without her, I do not wish to live. Her refusal of me is too hard a burden for me to bear;" and here Carleton, at the thoughts of the past and the fears of the future, both tinged with his guilt, wept like a child. If, by repentance and sincere regret, the murderer at last was pardoned and permitted to enter with the Saviour into Paradise, fortunate then was it for Carleton, if he, then and there, repented of his crime.

On leaving the woodland, Carleton struck out with bold footsteps to the turnpike leading to the city. At times he slackened up his pace, and stopped short and listened, but he heard not the steps of the avenging angel, which were closely upon his heels, neither did he see the bright gleam of the sword, whose keen edge lay directly across his path.

Carleton arrived in the city about an hour after the arrival of Garusha, and accompanying each was a detective. Feeling secure in their secret crime, they saw not the living, breathing shadow, which closely followed them. More closely than the shadows of life did the avenging angel pursue them with the shadows of death.

For nearly a month the game of life and death went on, during which time the bridal preparations for Grace's wedding steadily progressed, a short engagement only being agreed upon.

Long and wearily almost, Garusha waited for an oppor-

tunity, while nearer and nearer came the bridal hour, after which he felt there would be no hope. Gladly, perhaps, would he have deserted from his villain's duty, but he had counted Carleton's gold, and he felt that Carleton had paid dearly for his crime; besides, he could not have deserted, even if he would, for Destiny held him sternly to his appointed part in her great drama. Still, with a hardened heart, he watched for his opportunity. Not quite yet on the dial of the avenging angel had the hour come.

Marriage, it is said, is the great event in woman's life, and true is the saying, for on it hangs all of a woman's hopes. As Grace continued on in her preparations for the coming happy hour, she was not without some terrible misgivings as to Evan's safety, knowing that he stood in such deadly peril. As she thought, though, of their first meeting, and the curious agencies which had first brought them together, she seemed to see the great protecting hand of Providence.

Day by day Evan called upon her, and a more loving couple than they never hung on the tree of matrimony. To any unhappy married pair it would have been a cure for all their ills, could they have seen the perfect love between them.

For the bridal hour, Evan had presented her with a beautiful dress, purchased by him when in Europe, and which was being made up with all the taste that style could arrange, or fashion dictate.

Here let me say, that when a young lady is to be married, all concerned do their best, as a good matrimonial advertisement is worth all the extra labor and expense.

Bear this in mind, young ladies, that people are never so much interested in you as when you pass along from the bower of courtship to the marriage altar. This is the most interesting period of your lives, and after that, — after the honey-moon has set, and the bridal hour is numbered among the days that are gone, — you will find some of the outer gates of the world's pleasure closed to you forever ; but regret it not, for, as they closed upon you, the gates of a more boundless and complete joy opened before your eyes. Such indeed is the matrimonial state, when perfect and harmonious. If imperfect, and entered into from any other motives than those of love, it is like the pathway leading to the regions of the lost, where there is weeping and gnashing, and tearing of hearts. From such a fate may heaven deliver all those who contemplate matrimony, conjuring them to remember that it is for all life. The marriage vow is only dissolved by death, or divorce, which blasts life and character. Better, far better, is single blessedness than double unhappiness.

The bridal hour passed and the wedding day over, you cannot go back again to your single life. Think, then, earnestly of marriage, if you are about to test it, — look at it in its proper light and in all its bearings, and see you are not deceived. As you press the wedding-ring on the finger of your betrothed, remember that the long pathway of life lies before you, and that you have made a life-choice of your companion, and that through sickness and trial you are to shield and protect her. Along the coming years, age will gather, the sweet voice will change, the fair smile pass away, and the fresh look of youth wither like

summer's fairest flower, but love, if you possess it, will grow stronger and younger in your hearts.

Whether Evan and Grace indulged in any of these thoughts, I will not say ; but those who could have seen them in the hours they spent together, would have deemed any such advice intrusive. Would that all young couples who are under engagement felt the same fondness and love for each other. If such were the case, the world would take a long stride toward the good time coming, of which, alas, mankind dream and talk about too much, but, in fact, take but little pains to reach.

Oh, sweetly indeed may the poet sing  
Of the joys the good time coming will bring ;  
But when, oh when will the good time come,  
Oh when shall we hear its gladsome hum !

Ye angels, to whom in the courts of heaven  
Dim prophecy's mystic records are given,  
Oh, open the books, and tell us the time  
When the bells of the good time coming will chime !

## CHAPTER XXXII.

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Upon the field of life he stood,  
A beautiful almond tree of sixty years;  
His heart like unto a ripened sheaf  
Filled with the goodness of threescore.

---

THE door-bell of the Lees rang, and old Mr. Derby, Grace's uncle, was ushered in.

Uncle Derby was a fine gentleman of the olden school, and not much altered in appearance, since first we noticed him. He had been urged by Mr. Lee to come down and pay him a visit in his new house, and remain till after Grace's wedding, which was soon to take place.

As he had spent most of his lifetime in the country, it afforded him a rare pleasure to come to the city, and enjoy for awhile its sociability and stirring life. He was not one of that stern and crabbed kind of countrymen, who, looking over their own smiling acres, think there is no other farm or land but their own, as if what little ground they possessed was the dearest and most valuable patch of earth, and who, when they come to the city, look down upon it as if it owed its existence wholly to the country, and getting disgusted, take the first train back to their old farm-house, doubting much if they should find it still standing where they left it.

Uncle Derby was not one of this kind. Far from it. When he came to the city, he came for the very express and worthy object of enjoying himself. He was, fortunately, one of that happy class of people who have a knack of enjoying themselves wherever they are.

Grace, who was up stairs looking out of the window, clapped her hands with delight as she saw him alight from the carriage and approach the front door. Between uncle and niece there was a very good understanding, and they were always on excellent terms with each other. "Come to Grace's wedding! of course I will, — I should never forgive this old self of mine if I didn't," said Uncle Derby to himself, as he opened and read her letter of invitation.

Now, my readers, to ask a simple question, What is there in weddings which so interest many people to go to them? Can you tell me? Is it not mostly plain curiosity, easily excited? Or is it really an intense human sympathy, which hangs with lingering affection around the cradle, the bridal altar, and the grave?

"I suppose, Grace, that Uncle Derby has come to give you some good advice," said Liz, as coming up stairs she entered the room where Grace was busily engaged in completing her toilet. Beautiful as Grace was in person, she was also very particular in her dress, and she always looked neatly, and attired in good taste, and, on this occasion probably more so, as she was to see her good old Uncle Derby, who always called her his pretty, dear pet Grace.

How delightful often it is to witness the interest which the aged have in the young! How pleasing it is to see



the fresh fair flowers growing up around them in the pathway of life! How tenderly and affectingly the Saviour regarded the young when he was on earth!

Very much of this interest Uncle Derby felt, as Grace came down stairs to greet him and receive his kiss of welcome.

"Now, if that very handsome young man was here, Grace, I do not know but that I should make him feel jealous."

"Oh, not at all, uncle; there is not the least particle of jealousy about him, I assure you."

"So you are going to try married life, then, Grace."

"Yes, uncle, I have come to that happy conclusion. I think I have tried single life long enough. From your own experience, I've no doubt you can give some very good matrimonial advice to an inexperienced couple."

"I will not promise, Grace, as to that. If you have love in your hearts, you will prosper well enough. If you have not that, the best advice in the world is worth nothing. I will risk you, Grace, for some time after the wedding. But let me see your young man you have picked out, and I can perhaps tell you how well I like your choice. I have heard, Grace, that he is a very fine young man, and very handsome withal. I almost envy him, Grace, to tell the truth."

"There now, uncle, I am afraid you are getting jealous."

"Not at all, Grace. I congratulate both you and him on your approaching happiness. And when you get settled down in life, I want you to come up and see me,

and breathe the fresh country air for six months, more or less. I should be indeed happy if I could call you my own children."

"But you have not seen the young man yet, uncle, so you do not know how well you would like him."

"True, Grace, but I am inclined to trust to your judgment there. I will venture to say that you have made an excellent choice. Is he, Grace, so really good-looking as they say?"

"Yes, uncle; I must answer yes to that question, without any discount, and he has also as pretty a name to go with him. There, uncle, to give you some idea of him, here is a miniature of Mr. Evan Dale of New York. Put on your best eye-glasses now, and tell me how you like the picture of him?"

"Oh, if I only had some magnifying glasses, Grace, I could console you on your choice, by praising him up highly. Now, Grace, I'll warrant he is one of the finest young men extant, and probably in your mind there is none like him."

"Certainly, uncle, you have spoken the truth there. If there was another young man like him, I should not know which of them to love. I should be jealous."

"Well, Grace, from this likeness, I should think of him favorably."

"Is that all you can say, uncle?"

"Well, very favorably then, Grace, how will that do?"

"That will do better, uncle. But look at it again; you have not begun to see half the beauties or perfections."

"There, Grace, I see how it is, you want me to praise him, what shall I call him, perfect, lovely, and noble, and all that?"

"Oh no, uncle, not at all. Do not, I beseech you. You are only quizzing me to see how well I like him. I know your game. I have seen you before, uncle Derby; you cannot deceive me. How cunning you are!"

Grace here burst out in a fit of laughter, in which her uncle could not help taking part. "All is, uncle, if you do not like his looks, tell me so plainly. But as to that, I know how it is; you like the picture of him extremely, although you will not tell me so. Isn't that true, uncle? Now, own up."

"I should rather shake hands with him, Grace, and have a sociable chat with him, and then I can tell you just how I like the young man himself. One thing is certain, Grace, I could never like him as well as you do."

"Ah, that may be, uncle; I do not doubt it at all. Mr. Dale, I expect, will be here this afternoon, when I shall have the great pleasure of introducing him to you. You will not know all, then, uncle. When you know how strangely we have been brought together, you will be greatly surprised."

"Something romantic, then, Grace. Ah, that is just what will please me. I like romance, especially in love affairs. Truly love and romance go well and beautifully together," and uncle Derby, putting the miniature down on the table beside him, rubbed his hands together, and brushing his fine gray hair briskly back from each side of his jovial and good-natured countenance, settled back into

his chair with an easy satisfaction, while Grace related to him the principal points of interest which had led to the happy sequel between her and Evan.

"Well, Grace, that is indeed curious. It beats all the love stories I ever heard of, out and out," smilingly remarked her uncle, as she concluded. "Why couldn't you write a story or novel now, Grace? You have material enough. I would really like to see you figure as a heroine."

"But there is a dark side to it, uncle, which makes me very unhappy at times."

"What, on the young man's account, Grace?"

"Yes, uncle."

"Why so, Grace; is there any thing in Evan Dale's character or habits that you fear? Is he dissipated, or any thing of that kind? Or, perhaps, Grace, he is poor and proud."

"Oh no, uncle, nothing of that sort. His life is threatened, and even now I fear he is unsafe, although he goes well armed, and every precaution is taken."

"Ah, ha! Grace, you don't tell me so?"

"Yes, uncle, it is true, and you can very well judge of my feelings, and the suspense and fear which I am in sometimes."

"Tell me all about it, Grace. If so, I fear your romance has too much of a mooted tragedy in it."

As Grace could not refuse so reasonable a request, she assented, and related in brief to her uncle her accidental, but fortunate acquaintance with the murderous plot against her lover's life.

"Why, that surprises me more than what you told me before, Grace. I cannot say that I like the tragedy part as well as I do the romance. Ah, what a wicked young man that must be, who could attempt such a crime! Well, Grace, as you were so fortunate as to be there, so as to hear their wicked plot divulged, I have the impression that all will come out well. It does not seem possible to me that you can fail of a successful issue in such a case. To think that you should be brought together in such a strange manner, and that you should happen to be a fortunate witness to such a base plot, and then that your dear Evan should be murdered right out, — why, for me, I cannot believe it. It seems to me that you were placed there in the woods on purpose by Providence, that you might be the means of saving the young man's life. Don't it seem so, Grace?"

"Yes, uncle, I am glad to take such a view of it."

"Why, Grace, only think, — Evan Dale will be under a life-long obligation to you, if he escapes unharmed. I trust your father has taken the fit precautions in such a case."

"Oh yes, uncle, the detectives watch them closely, night and day."

"I am extremely sorry, I declare, Grace, to hear what you have told me. I think, though, you are under the guidance of a good angel, who will bring you through safely."

"I trust so, uncle, but hopes will not always chase away fears. To know that he is so dear to me, and that he is so exposed to mortal danger continually."

"I know it, Grace. But calm yourself. Do not give over to despair."

"Oh, I am hopeful, uncle, but I am also fearful."

"Fearful of what, Grace?" inquired her father, who just entered the room. "Ha, Derby, is that yourself, really? What is it you have been talking about that has made Grace so fearful?"

"Oh, it is all about a certain Mr. Dale, and of the great danger to which he is exposed from a couple of villains. I trust, Mr. Lee, you have taken ample precautions to insure his safety."

"Yes, we have done that, Mr. Derby. I consider he is perfectly secure. You see he is such a young man, that we have to take very good care of him."

"Just so, Mr. Lee. Grace has showed me his picture, and, for an old man, I have been very much charmed with it. It makes me think of how good looking I was when a young man."

In fact, to speak a good word for Uncle Derby to the doubtful, he was quite good looking in his younger years. Without any particular ambition, he had lived a life of ease and comfort, which was not wholly devoid of interest or good deeds. He was one of that free and easy class of people one sometimes meets in the world, who make themselves happy, and delight all others around them. Truly, sweet milk is better than sour in the world's dairy!

"Then, Derby, you really think Grace's young man is charming?"

"I do, indeed, Mr. Lee. It seems he has been charming enough to thoroughly charm Grace's affections, and

for a young man to do that, bespeaks well for him, I am sure. But how in the world they should have been brought together so opportunely, is what amazes me wonderfully. Such romance, or truth, rather, savors strongly of the marvellous doings of Destiny. Some do not believe in it, but for one, I am a stronger believer in it than ever. Isn't that so, Mr. Lee?"

"True, Derby. I think myself there is a wonderful destiny working in it, the end of whose workings we are yet to see. Mr. Dale has yet to escape the peril which daily and nightly threatens him. If he was certainly safe I should feel more easy."

"I pity him, Mr. Lee, certainly, and I sympathize with Grace deeply on his account, but, as I was telling Grace, I think that after they have been brought together so curiously, that a good and all-wise Providence will carry them safely through, and remove the cause of their fear and threatened danger. On this ground, I take rather a hopeful view. The very fact of Grace's being a witness to the interview in the woods, assures me that the villains will surely be thwarted."

"If I could look into the future, uncle, and see that it was so, I should have no fear. And then, Destiny does not always work in favor of the good. It smiles often on good and evil alike."

"Well, Grace, we can only leave it to Providence, and trust that every thing will come out all right. With all our theories and speculations, we cannot alter or change the result."

This doctrine of destiny, in which Uncle Derby and

Grace had indulged, has long been one of the most doubtful topics that ever engaged the human mind. From all we can gather of the history of mankind, we find that a belief has always been entertained that some controlling power ruled earthly events.

Further than to prove this we cannot go with certainty. We know it works, but how it works, we cannot tell. If we attempt it, we are lost in the wild, unshorn fields of speculation and mystery. It seems fair, however, to conclude, that if there is a power infinite and all-wise, which holds the earth in its place, and keeps the stars and the sun in their appointed stations, then how much more is it apparent to a certainty, that there is a power which controls men, and moves them whithersoever it will, so that the ends of divine wisdom are reached.

In connection with this subject, believe me, those immortal and beautiful lines of Shakspeare, touching this same theme, and which are so often quoted, were not written altogether because they were good poetry and blank verse. Neither are the touching words of Christ, on this same subject, to be disregarded, when he compared the care of Providence over mankind, with that over material things. If divine power rules in the material world, and cares for that in all its bearings, how much more does it care for man and his welfare. Even as far as the material world goes, Providence rules human fate. In the very fact of man being a dependent creature in the world around him, can be plainly and clearly read the doctrine and force of Destiny. If there was not the controlling power, then all would be chaos and disorder, and the sun and moon



and stars would go down to a night which would know no morning.

As we look forth on the fitness and beauty and order which reign in the material world, and the comfort and luxury which surround us, none but those who are woefully blinded can fail to see an overruling power, which, if it controls the earth, also controls all who are in it. Is not this, reader, as clear and plain an exposition of the subject as was ever preached from any pulpit?

Probably, however, neither Grace nor her father or uncle took this extended view of the subject, for the dinner-bell ringing, called them to a much more inviting topic, and no wonder at all, for people when they are hungry had rather eat than think, and, indeed, this is one of the very rules of that Destiny which controls us. This is, in fact, a practical application of the subject, too forcible to be gainsayed.

After dinner, the barouche was got ready, and all the family, together with uncle Derby, took a ride of a few miles circuit around the city.

Arriving home at about dusk, they found Evan Dale there, awaiting them, when the customary introduction to Uncle Derby took place.

"Well, you are alive yet, Mr. Dale, so that I have had the great pleasure of shaking hands with you."

"Oh yes, Mr. Derby, through *grace*, I am still in existence."

"You needn't go to punning my name now, Evan," said Grace, smiling.

"In that manner, Grace, I think Mr. Dale shows his appreciation of your name."

"It has been punned so much that way, uncle, I shall have to change it for something less punable."

"As to that, Grace, I've no doubt you will change your name soon. You like Mr. Dale's name so well, you are going to appropriate it to yourself, and, not contented with that, you are virtually going to seize the young man himself. Ah, you fair thief! A young man is not safe a moment where you are. It's fortunate I am not a young man."

"Ha, ha! uncle, you may well consider yourself so. But you must remember that you were not exempt from the same fate in your younger days. You need not try to make Mr. Dale think you are an old bachelor."

"You are afraid, Grace, if I had been, I might get him disgusted with married life."

"Not at all, uncle. In spite of the best advice, people will get married. I've no doubt you would have given Mr. Dale good advice, though, for most old bachelors are delighted to see their friends married, although they do not get married themselves. Isn't that good moral philosophy?"

"Ah, Grace, you a good philosopher. You have converted Mr. Dale, and that will do. One convert, Grace, is a plenty."

"Well, uncle, I have not converted him any more than he has me."

"Then, Grace, you are two converts converted by each other to a belief in earth's holiest religion. I know how it is, Grace; I have been all through its delightful experience."

Thus the conversation ran on between them till tea-time, and with Evan Dale, Uncle Derby was delighted, rejoicing within himself that Grace had such an excellent taste in her own matrimonial matters. The next morning the conversation between Grace and her uncle was renewed by the former asking, —

“ Well, uncle, how do you like the young man now that you have seen him ? ”

“ Oh, very much, Grace ; I was highly delighted with him. If I was a young lady now, I should give you a liberal commission for seeking out a husband for me. I convict you, Grace, of making a very fine choice for yourself out of the masculine gender. I cannot give you any advice, Grace, as you have advised yourself so well. Any thing I should say would only be superfluous. I have no doubt, Grace, that you and Evan will get along very well together, provided that tragedy turns out all right.”

Here Uncle Derby, taking his hat and cane, prepared himself to accompany Mr. Lee down town for a morning walk.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

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How mournful sounds the autumn wind,  
How dark the shadow brooding on the night.

---

IT was a black, gloomy autumn evening, and the wind swept ruthlessly along, tearing here and there the withered leaves from the trees, as if revengeful for their decay.

As now and then Carleton met Evan, his teeth and his hands clenched with rage, while Evan firmly grasped, just inside of his coat, the friendly butt of Mr. Lee's revolver.

While Carleton was incensed at Evan, he wondered where Garusha was, and why he had not done his appointed duty. "The villain!" muttered Carleton to himself, "I shall have to do it myself, if he does not do it soon."

Day by day, Carleton had eagerly taken up the morning's paper, with the expectation of reading the account of the little tragedy he had plotted. Suspicion never for a moment entered his mind that all was known, and that he was watched continually. As he glanced at the white invitation card to the wedding of Grace, the envelope of which bore her neat signature, little did he think she knew the blackness of his heart so well.

On this very evening, so lowering and gloomy, Garusha,

armed with a rifle, concealed under his cloak, resolved to execute his villainous purpose. As the streets were still, and the night unusually dark, it seemed to offer him a good opportunity. Knowing that Evan had not called on Grace in the afternoon, Garusha felt sure of his calling on her in the evening, and in this he reasoned correctly.

The clock had just struck seven, when Evan left his hotel to call on Grace. Hastily he passed onward, and when turning the corner of the street leading to Mr. Lee's house, he suddenly met Carleton coming in the opposite direction. Fired with anger as Carleton was, a serious encounter would probably have ensued between them, but just then, as Carleton was about to menace Evan, the sharp report of Garusha's rifle was heard, the ball from which grazing the coat which Evan wore, passed directly into the breast of Carleton, who, gasping and falling heavily to the ground, immediately expired.

The sound of the fleeing feet of Garusha, followed by the detective, could be distinctly heard by Evan, as he stooped down to ascertain the condition of the fallen man. But no, there was no life there. The pulse was still forever. Carleton had gone to his reward.

Not more struck with horror was Evan Dale, than he was with surprise, when he discovered the ghastly features of Carleton in the murdered man. For a moment he stood viewing Carleton in dumb amazement, the next moment he heard the voice of the detective singing out to Garusha to stop. Closely followed, Garusha fled for his life, and fearing he would escape, the detective, who was a good shot, suddenly stopped the murderer in his career

by summarily shooting him down. A groan, a gasp, and the spirit of Garusha fled after that of Carleton, and the tragedy was over. The murderer in heart, and the murderer in deed, had made their sudden exit from the world with the red stain of murder on their souls.

Evan, learning the result of the second firing, and leaving the crowd which was engaged in bearing home the body of Carleton, hastened to Mr. Lee's house, to inform them of the sad particulars, and assure Grace of his safety, who, in the mean time, had heard some rumors of them.

Evan fortunately arrived just in time to save Grace from fainting, so fearful was she that Evan had fallen a victim to the murderous plot. The joy of Grace and the Lee family was unbounded, as he stood unharmed before them, and Grace, overcome by this, as before she was by her fear, threw her arms impulsively around Evan's neck, and laying her head on his shoulder wept for joy; while Evan, lovingly clasped her in return, and strove fondly to bring her back to her wonted smiles of sunshine and gladness.

Slowly Grace recovered from the violent fear and joy which alternately had passed over her feelings, and, as she looked up again into Evan's face with her usual sweet smile, she felt more than reassured of his safety.

Far into the evening hours Evan and Grace lingered together. What happy hours were these to two such lovers, whom destiny had united, and against whose love not even the gates of death, or the powers of darkness had prevailed. For them the avenging angel, who follows closely in the steps of Destiny, to see that none thwart the

designs of Providence, had decreed and worked a great deliverance.

Terrible, though, to behold, were the feelings of the Carleton family, when the remains of Carleton were brought home. Criminal though he was, his family knew it not then. Great was their grief, while over the community the shadow of it rested like a mystery deep and impenetrable.

Many and conflicting were the speculations on the subject, and much doubt was expressed as to Garusha being the real murderer of Carleton, as no clue could be discovered which seemed to bind the two together.

The Carleton family and their advisers resolved to arrest Evan as the criminal, from the close proximity in which he was found to Carleton when he fell. Taking also his and Guy's connection with Grace Lee, their suspicions seemed to be thoroughly well founded, and the next day Evan was somewhat surprised by a police officer tapping him upon the shoulder, and informing him he was his prisoner.

Hastily penning a note to Grace, informing her of this, he accompanied the officer. On arriving at the jail, he was allowed the use of the jailer's parlor, as his place of confinement until his examination, which would take place in a few days.

On receiving Evan's note, Grace was again cast down. Could it be that her dear Evan should occupy a felon's cell? She resolved to go and stay with him during his confinement.

Just then her father entered the room. Anticipating her feelings, her father spoke to her in words of calmness and comfort, assuring her that Evan's confinement was but temporary.

"But I must go to him, father."

"Certainly, Grace; I have ordered the carriage, and we will go and see him."

In less than an hour they were on their way, and they were much surprised, as they entered, to see him comfortably esconced in the jailer's well-furnished room, and to find him looking as well and happily as ever.

"I have come to keep you company, Evan," remarked Grace as she entered.

"Dear Grace," replied Evan, "I shall not remain long here. My only anxiety is in regard to our wedding day, which you know comes soon."

"Oh never mind that, Evan, we can put it off, if obliged to."

Just then the officer entered to inform Evan, that in ten minutes he must be ready to proceed to court, where his examination would take place. Short indeed did the time seem to them, at the end of which, Evan, clasping Grace once more, and imprinting a kiss on her rosy cheek, entered the carriage with the officer, which conveyed them to the court-house. Closely behind, followed Mr. Lee's carriage, containing himself and his daughter and Lizzie, together with the detective officers, all of whom were summoned as witnesses.

Mr. Lee being well acquainted with the judges of the court, had exerted himself in Evan's behalf, and by his



endeavors, together with the excitement of the case, an early and immediate examination of Evan Dale was agreed upon.

As he was entering the court house, Mr. Lee met Mr. Carleton, and urged upon him the abandonment of the charge against Evan, as one which, on examination of the proper evidence before the coroner's jury, would clear him immediately.

But Mr. Carleton would listen to no such proposal. Incensed against Mr. Lee for making such a request, he remarked, "No, Mr. Lee, you need not think I am going to retract, in order that Mr. Dale may marry your daughter and escape. I know the wedding day is fixed, but I think the marriage will not take place."

"Ah, you will see, Mr. Carleton."

"You will also see, Mr. Lee."

"Mark my words, Mr. Carleton," said Mr. Lee, in reply, as he drew up closely at the side of Mr. Carleton, and whispered in his ear, "Mark my words, you shall see the truth of this mystery, even through the guilt and wickedness of your own son."

These were the last words the two ever spoke together, as they entered the court room, when the case was immediately called up.

A vast crowd filled the court, which, as the examination continued, was almost breathless with attention. When the evidence concerning the secret interview in the woods, and the subsequent course of Garusha and Carleton was given in, together with the testimony of the detectives, the Carletons almost fainted away in the court room, so

that it was some time before they recovered sufficiently for the court to proceed. Terrible indeed was the effect of the evidence upon them, which clearly convicted their son of murder. It was evident to them that they had not the least shadow of a case against Evan, while a loud hum and bustle all over the court room showed how great was the surprise of the spectators at the turn the case had taken.

To make the evidence overwhelming and decisive, showing that Carleton was killed by Garusha his accomplice, the surgeon who had probed the wound of Carleton and found the ball, produced the same, which, on examination, just fitted the rifle which Garusha had with him on the fatal evening.

Without any delay, the court, on conclusion of the evidence, ordered the immediate discharge of Evan from custody, and, arm in arm with Grace, he left the court room.

As was the joy of the Lees and their friends, so was the unhappiness of the Carletons, who, bending under the double load of their affliction and the heavy guilt of their son, retired in inconsolable anguish.

Directly on the head of Guy Carleton had descended the dreadful fate he had prepared for another, and the verdict of all, who read the startling and dreadful testimony, was in accordance with the facts.

Startling as was this case, and ending as it did in the tragical fate of its authors, it perhaps is not an exception. Though the world may not always know it, yet many a

man suffers for his misdeeds in this life, as summarily as did Carleton and Garusha.

Notwithstanding the gloom cast over the community by the stirring events which had happened, the arrangements for the wedding continued unabated.

Society in general, was again on the top wave of excitement at the announcement, that three weddings in high life were on the tapis.

Besides Grace's wedding, that of her friend Lizzie, and also that of her former lover, Mr. Ford, was also to take place, and all the arrangements were perfected, so that all three were to take place in succession.

Come with me, dear reader, to the wedding.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

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Ring out, ring out the bridal bells;  
Strike up the wedding march.

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**B**RIGHTLY the wedding day dawned. The clear blue dome of the sky showed not a single cloud, as the sun went forth in his glory to greet the world.

It was arranged that the three weddings should all take place at Trinity Church, which was prepared especially for the occasion.

A beautiful sight indeed was this grand wedding spectacle. How, alas, shall I describe it! Three loving couples, all being united at the same time and place, in the golden bands of matrimony, is a sight rarely seen. Vainly, perhaps, will memory run back to find a parallel in real life.

Sweetly on the brilliant audience, waiting with anxious expectation, floated the music of the "Wedding March" from the massive organ, as one after another in succession, the bridal couples and their respective suites, marched up the broad aisle in one blaze and procession of elegance and beauty, and seeming, at the time, like a glorious constellation in the form of three gleaming silver crescents, taking their place around the bridal altar. Immediately on the entrance of the bridal suites, the audience grew breathless

with attention and observation. Tickets of admission to the church were issued, and, in addition to the audience within, which immediately filled up the aisles after the bridal parties had passed, there was a large audience of interested spectators outside, witnessing their arrival and departure.

At the conclusion of the marriage ceremonies, nearly an hour was spent in salutations and greetings by the friends of the several couples, after which, a grand wedding festival was given at the house of Mr. Lee.

Thus lightly and pleasantly the hours of the wedding day passed. It would be impossible to describe the wedding gifts which flowed in upon the happy couples. Suffice it to say, that Grace received for her wedding portion a princely sum from her father, while her friend Lizzie, at Grace's request, was presented by Mr. Lee with a splendidly furnished residence.

As for Ford, he had compensated himself and his affections by taking Miss Mary Lynne, the heiress, whom he loved far better than Miss Grace Lee, by whom, however, as a wedding gift, he was presented with a splendid and costly service of plate.

And now, dear reader, the wedding day is over, the marriage rites concluded, the vows are spoken, and the wedding ring glistens on the finger. The honey-moon also is passed, and of all the pleasures and joys crowded into that happy day, only the sweet memories of it will remain. Though it was but as yesterday, yet it is effectually gone as though it was a thousand years ago.

Did they live happy, do you ask?

Look in, dear reader, with me, while I beg leave to introduce you to Mr. and Mrs. Evan Dale. Coldly and unfeelingly we will not leave them at the bridal altar. No, we will call and see them after they are settled down in life. We will call upon them as old friends, in whose welfare we have a kindly interest. Yes, indeed, we will make a call upon them, and catch, if we can, some of that happy sunshine in which they live.

To be sure they will be happy to see us, and they will welcome us gladly. They are not afraid to have their friends call upon them after they are married.

Some, after marriage, are fearful of their friends visiting them, as if alarmed lest they should catch a glimpse of the unhappiness of their position. Oh, how many there are in this world who are thus afflicted!

To be united unto one you love not,  
Is deepest misery and wretchedness.

Taking this into view, it is no wonder that, as the good book tells us, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" in heaven. The great misery resulting from this course here on earth, is probably the reason why marriage is interdicted in that higher and better world, which we so often read of.

This must be so, for if, as is represented, heaven exists, and is such a happy place, there can be no unhappy married couples there.

Oftentimes, from how trivial a thing will unhappiness spring, as from a thorn piercing the too careless finger, and producing severe pain.

And this is not all. Matrimonial thorns, when they pierce once, are sure to pierce again very often, and they will grow into flowers which never before knew a thorn. Call it a violent spat of passion and ill temper, if you will, but it springs from the mind nevertheless, and one who is given to such, generally has more of them. Tell me if you ever knew a leopard with but one spot? So, if you can show me but one person who has indulged only in one fit of passion in the holy state of matrimony, that one is next to perfection, and will not grow any nearer to it by indulging in more of them.

The happy matrimonial couples are those only who are perfectly so, between whom no bitter word is spoken, no happy blessed memory or feeling erased by the rude breath of anger. To reach this happiness a peculiar fitness and harmony must exist between two characters. The frame of the harp must be united together, and its strings must properly be attached to it and fitly tuned, before it will give forth its sweet strains.

Sad indeed are the passions indulged in too often by man and wife nowadays. After being apparently so lovingly united, they in reality cruelly separate. Each takes a single, separate, and lonely pathway, leading both to two full wells of sorrow in the end. That the blame always rests on man and wife equally, I will not affirm. Often the bad and dissipated habits of the husband are the ripe seeds of matrimonial unhappiness. Too much pity and tenderness cannot be shown for the wife of such a man. Notwithstanding she loved him, she ought never, in the face of her knowing him to be such, to have married him.

This is one form of unhappy married life which is quite common. Young lady reader, if you are engaged or attached to a young man of this character, flee from him. Hope not to reform him. You will perhaps say, "Well, I do not know that such really is the case." Find out, then, what his habits are, and who he associates with, for if you do not find it out now, you will find it out then to your sorrow. ( After the wedding-day, it is a very poor time to find out who you are married to. ) *Good night*

I might go on with the list of various kinds of unhappily married couples, but I desist. I am going with some friends of mine to call on Mr. and Mrs. Dale, and I do not like to take such unpleasant thoughts along with me. Such observations as are useful, though, I will note down for the benefit of weeping and unhappy ones.

We approach the house where they live. True, they live in one which bespeaks that it holds happy and contented occupants. If it was but an humble cottage they would be just as happy in it.

The noble mansion house of the Dale family, overlooking the Hudson, has been renovated and fitted up expressly to receive Evan and his lovely bride. It has not altered materially in its outward appearance since last we referred to it, and the noble dog, crouched on the piazza, seems happier and more at his ease now that his young master is at home, while now and then he wags his tail in delightful anticipations of the frolics he is soon to enjoy with his pet playmates, Grace's children.

Going up the broad front steps, we enter the hospitable mansion, and are soon shaking hands with the master and



mistress, and kissing little rosy-cheeked Evan and curly-headed Grace, while big, black, pet Brutus, comes wagging his bushy tail for his share of our notice and caresses.

Seating ourselves in the comfortable sitting-room, we engage in sociable converse on the various topics of the day, and, as we pass the time pleasantly away, we notice how happily husband and wife agree. There are no cross looks, no unkind words thrust in on our ears, no upbraiding of each other, but all is gentleness, respect, and love. The wife does not have her way, neither does the husband have his way, neither are they ruled by their servants. In all family and household matters, however managed, and they are managed well, there is a sweet acquiescence of the husband and wife. Neither rudely crosses the pathway of the other, and what either decree, both are agreed upon. To the taste and judgment of each there is due deference. Not an unkind word or action has passed between them since they were married. They are as tender and loving of each other as when they were under engagement. Evan thinks every thing of his dear wife, Grace, and she in return thinks ever thing of her dear husband, Evan, and so life with them passes happily on.

Rarely Evan appears at any place of amusement; unless accompanied by his wife. If she does not desire to go, he does not compel her to go, or worse than that, he does not bolt out of the house in a fit of passion, or more quietly and sulkily leave her alone to spend the evening, as best she can, making up for his disappointment by courting the society of some of his congenial associates. No, nothing of the kind. If his wife does not feel like going, or

is too ill to go, Evan stays and spends the evening with her, and he always enjoys himself in her company, whether at home or elsewhere.

Many may think lightly of this, but there is much in this, and more, probably, than we are aware of. Take many of the most successful men, and they have been devotedly attached to their wives. Indeed, on this nail has hung the golden key of many a man's success and influence.

Never does Evan Dale go into his house, but his wife, if she is well and at home, rushes forth to meet and exchange kisses with him, after which, their children share the same demonstrations of love and affection. And with love ruling supreme in the family, their children grow up lovingly and loved around them. Tenderly they rear the boy and girl springing up under the loving branches of the parent tree. Not a harsh or unkind word is ever spoken to them. Where husband and wife truly love each other, their children are likely to be brought up in the paths of goodness and virtue. Where parents do not love each other, their children can never be brought up properly.

I maintain that love is the only basis of a happy household, in all its relations. Its place is there more than any other in the wide world. The cause of unhappiness in marriage relations is certainly the want of this. Sometimes the blame rests with the wife, sometimes with the husband, and sometimes with both. And why? I will tell you. Because, after marriage they open their eyes

and discover they are wholly unfitted for each other, and often this discovery ends in divorce and separation.

As we leave, dear reader, the happy home of Grace Lee and her husband, we take our farewell of as happy a couple as we shall ever know. It may never be our fortune to meet with as happy a one again. No selfishness, envy, or jealousy are there. All is love, pure and unalloyed. Secure from unhappiness by the sweet love they bear one another, year after year passes gently on, and still there is no end to their love.

Their children grow daily in beauty around them, inheriting the name, character, and dispositions of their parents, and for miles around, the Evan Dale family are noted and admired for their liberal and loving spirit, which, shining through all their actions, tells of loving hearts within.

You who are unhappy in your marriage relations, take pattern of Evan Dale and his wife! Go and do likewise, and you cannot fail of happiness! Cultivate love assiduously, and you will not miss of life's greatest blessing! Disregard my advice, or treat it lightly as you will, this is the only way to the pleasant fields of delight and enjoyment. I could write another chapter to convince you, but I refrain.

The sun is sinking adown the western sky as I pen this my closing chapter, and ere I go, dear reader, I linger around you longingly and lovingly, and taking your hand in mine, hope and pray, that the happiness and love and fortune of Evan Dale and Grace Lee, may be your por-

tion, If you have love in your hearts, as strong and as pure, you will be supremely happy. Farewell, then, farewell, till we meet again.

As for Grace's friends, Lizzie and Francis Ford, they also lived happily, and in their frequent visits to each other, in which all three happy couples met together, their minds and memories fondly looked back with a peculiar pleasure to that wedding day of the autumn time.















